

THE MEANS,

&c.

ADVERTISEMENT.

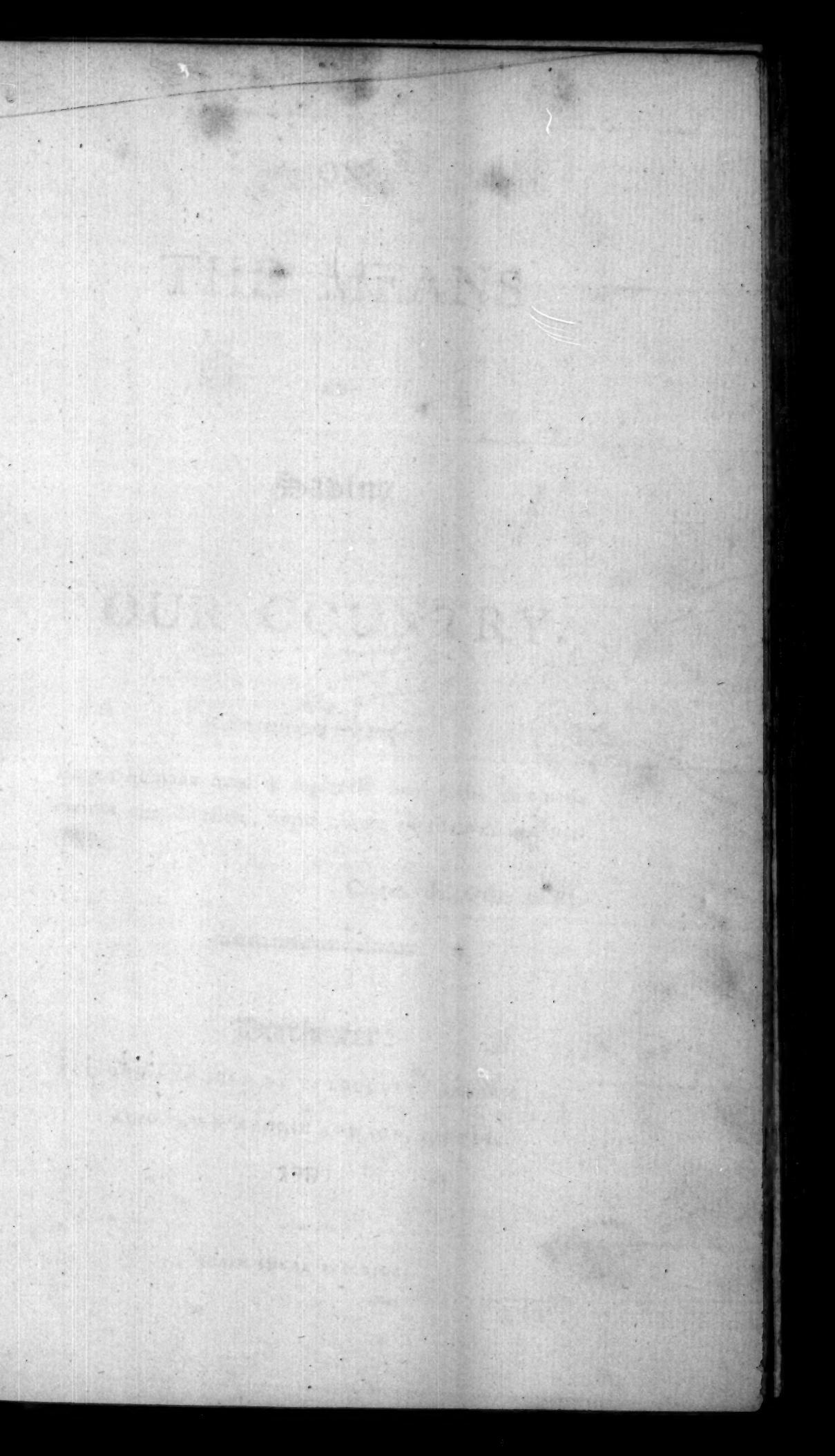
After this Pamphlet was put to press, it was found that the notes to the third part were too numerous to insert, as they would have extended it to an inordinate length: The subject therefore, will be pursued in another pamphlet which will speedily be published under the title of the third section; and which will also contain the Appendix omitted in the present, and serve as a sequel to it.

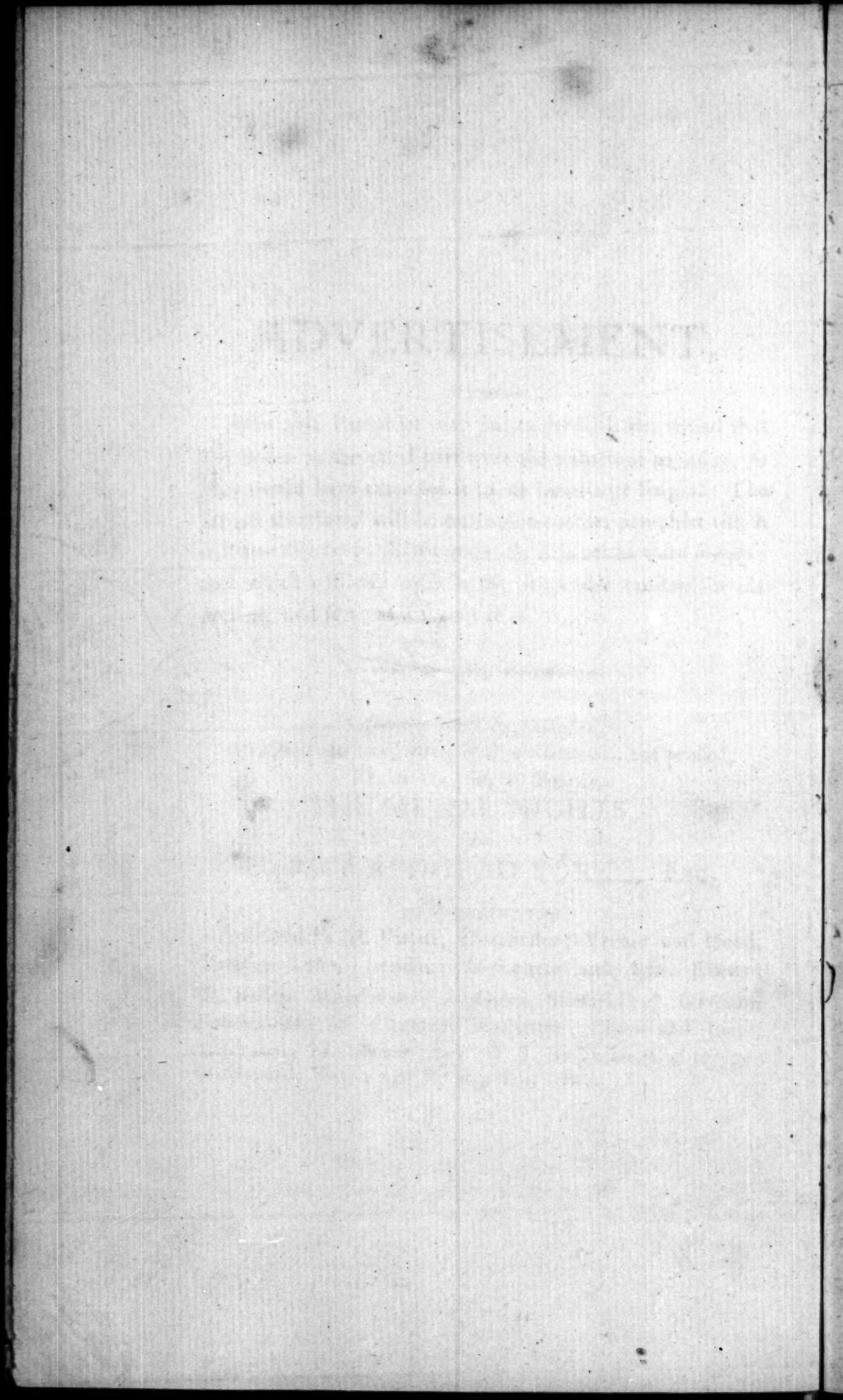
Speedily will be published,
Elegantly printed in one Volume Octavo, hot pressed,
Price 10s. 6d. in Boards,
THE MURAL NIGHTS,
OF
HENRY REDHEAD YORKE, Esq.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Received by M. Virtue, Dorchester; Vernor and Hood,
Birchin Lane, London; M'Kenzie and Son, Exeter;
T. Boden, Manchester; A. Gales, Sheffield; J. Graham,
Sunderland; W. Charney, Newcastle; Crane and Jones,
Liverpool; M. Turner, Beverly; J. Deighton, Cambridge;
S. Hazard, Bath; and W. Rawson, Hull.

SOP
H.H.





ON
THE MEANS
OF
Saving
OUR COUNTRY.

Eaque humana ratio & sapientia boni civis, commoda
civium non divellere, atque omnes æquitate cædem con-
tineat.

Cicero. de. Offic. 2. 83.

Dorchester:

PRINTED AND SOLD BY T. LOCKETT, BOOKSELLER.

ALSO, BY M'KENZIE AND SON, EXETER.

1797

PRICE THREE SHILLINGS.

B. 627.97.2924

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
DEPOSITED BY THE LIBRARY OF THE
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

~~GD~~ OCT 21 1939

ON

THE MEANS,

&c.

MEN OF ENGLAND! The time is no more when a respect for your passions, and a fear of discomposing the public order, required individuals to observe a prudent and cautious forbearance in their political opinions. That public order has however been disturbed apparently, by the very means which have been adopted for its conservation. On all sides the gloom of despondency obtrudes itself on the reluctant mind, and those clouds of misfortune which have long been gathering over this devoted country, seem at length ready to burst upon us. If i be correct in this statement, it will follow that prudential motives should now give place to the idea of public safety, and every

sense of personal enjoyment to the just dread of national ruin. If submission to the venerable constitution and laws of our country be a principle of moral obligation, to point out the means by which they may be preserved and defended, is not less so; and in the political as in the moral world, the hour of adversity is the best season for sober and temperate reflection. It is not too late to profit by misfortune; we may yet devise measures of recovery and preservation. If we make good choice of our time, we shall avert the dangers by which we are threatened; but on the other hand, if we await in listless torpor under the specious and idle hope, that in the moral governance of the world, some unforeseen event may arise to enliven our condition, we shall surely be undone. When the distemper is become desperate, we shall be forced on desperate remedies, and we shall look back with repentance and sorrow, on that criminal selfsufficiency and negligence, which led us to depart from that great lesson of civil wisdom which inculcates Self Knowledge. It is the unhappy characteristic

teristic of nations to be most arrogant and most presumptuous, when the awful period of their decline approaches. These vices arise from a mistaken confidence, and are the certain preludes of destruction. Let us on the contrary, meet our situation with manly fortitude, but with a sincere intention to examine and to correct. The habit of reflection necessarily begets a disposition to wisdom and to justice; and to think on our circumstances, is a sure way to maintain our character and reputation. We shall then find, that deplorable as our situation is, which i am sorry to say, we owe entirely to ourselves, there yet remains vigor enough in our constitution to save the country, if to constitutional means we call in the aid of that constitutional freedom, which our forefathers planned, and which their degenerate posterity have despised.

If i have adventured to launch again into the wide ocean of politics, it is with no design to engage in polemical controversy, or to revive ancient antipathies. On the contrary, i consider

myself as faithfully discharging a great social duty, from which i shall not suffer myself to be diverted by any considerations of obloquy, insult, or intimidation. It is the province of reason only to convince: to force conviction on the mind by means of power, is to insult mankind; it is worse, it is downright folly, because its tendency is only to make hypocrites and conspirators. After all that i have patiently submitted to, during a long confinement, for delivering rashly, but honestly, opinions on the state of the country, it may be thought the height of imprudence to hazard again even a sentence on the subject. That i have entertained the same notion is obvious from the rigid silence i have hitherto observed. As long as there was hope, as long as there was confidence, as long as the national glory was untarnished, i never thought it prudent to raise my feeble voice against the measures that were pursued, or the men who were trusted. It was my wish to turn aside from the disgusting spectacle that i was daily doomed to witness, of a great and powerful nation

nation divided within itself at a period when unanimity was most required. It was my wish to have banished from my mind the recollection of scenes which revolt the understanding, and sicken the heart of man. I saw the most powerful confederacy ever formed in the annals of the world, for the purpose of subjugating *one* nation, range themselves around that very nation they endeavoured to subdue, and the giant arm of that victorious power directed against my own country; the only one that has remained of this great combination. Disaster rolled upon disaster, defeat succeeded defeat; one horror was no sooner appeased than another sprung up in its place more terrible than the last, and passed in quick succession thro' the troubled mind, like the ghosts of Banquo's line. Many times i have attempted to deliver an opinion, and as often have i been diverted from the undertaking, under the hope that by prudent measures, we might recover the vantage ground we had lost, by embarking in this calamitous and ill-fated war. Besides, there was just reason to apprehend

prehend that any observations which might fall from *me*, would be regarded with an eye of prejudice and partiality. The passions of men were in too troublous and agitated a state to admit of sober advice, and the hollow voice that issued from the gloom of a prison, would be heard with derision and contempt.

For these reasons, with others which at this important juncture, it would be useless to enumerate, i desisted from all political discussion, and bowing submissively and without repining to that punishment which i could not avert; i retired within myself, or devoted my hours to the society of the mute and peaceable depositaries of the sentiments of mankind. If it be asked by what new pretensions i now intrude my sentiments on the world; i answer, that the draughts of coercion do not operate like the waters of Lethe, to drown all reflection, and to make the captive renounce his duty and his country. In every free country, (and every country ought to be free) men must forfeit

feit all claim to integrity if they withhold their opinions, when they believe that the publication of them may be attended with benefit. In the prosecution of libels, the law adverts to national order; it no where infers political incapacity as the result of punishment. In the fourth year of imprisonment, a man must have had many opportunities of meditating on the affairs of his country, without prejudice and without enthusiasm. And it is not improbable, if he have reflected at all on public subjects, that from past experience he will now judge of them more calmly and more advantageously. If indeed, clubs of the disaffected had frequented my place of confinement; if sober men, prompted by curiosity had ventured within these walls, and returned drunk with the vapors of Jacobinism, which they had inhaled, and which like the baneful Upas of Java, i am supposed to diffuse around me; if i had affronted the public morals, by indecent sarcasms on religion, or the public justice by inflammatory libels on the Constitution of the country; there would be

be good and valid reasons for questioning my claim to the public hearing. But, it is well known, and i wish it to be kept constantly in mind, that for three years past, i have been totally unconnected with any description of political men whatever. The selfsufficient incendiary is as much an object of my abhorrence, as the fawning courtier is of my contempt. Party men of every denomination, i have forgotten, as they doubtless have forgotten me. I am therefore in league with none of them. To this it may be added, that having been shut out so long from the world, i have been enabled to make a most profitable use of this concluding *collegiate* education ; to discover my errors and to learn how to rectify them ; to examine my former opinions, to reject what were false, and to retain with unshaken firmness, what are true ; to enquire into the principles of the Constitution under which i am destined to live, and to give it that just tribute of applause and veneration which is deservedly due to its superior excellence. But all these things

things do not preclude investigation. We may approve without flattery, and censure without hate. The sense of all this, does not prevent us from finding fault; indeed, there is great room for it.

Besides these observations, which are personal to myself, I feel my conduct further strengthened by the example of the best legislators in every age and nation. We are told* that Solon would not permit any one of the people of Athens to neglect the duties he owed to the public. On this principle, he enacted that singular but wise ordinance, that those should be held criminal who took no part in the public concerns of their nation. For he would not have them be indifferent and unaffected with the fate of the public, when their own concerns were upon a safe bottom; nor when they were in health, be insensible to the distempers and griefs of their country. This law has been censured by some, § but it has been

B

generally

* Plutarch in vit. Solon.

§ Particularly by Plutarch in his treatise de Sera Numinis Vindicta.

generally approved by those who are experienced in political affairs.† And well it may be so; for it is well known, that the more honest part of the community are generally least disposed to engage in political contention. It was therefore a law founded on long experience and profound reflection; because we all know that men of condition generally keep aloof in times of public dissention, and refrain from exposing themselves to those inconveniences, which confusion generates in society. Hence, their activity in the defence of their country, is not proportioned to the violent exertions of the factious who endeavour to destroy it. The good party, finding themselves abandoned by those, who, by uniting with them, would have given weight, authority, and energy to their measures, become feeble against the frontless audacity and violence of a small number of scoundrels. Unfortunately, there is not in this country any law of a similar nature. This circumstance may perhaps be attributed

† By Aulus Gellius Noctes Atticæ l. 1. c. 2. (he gives the law itself very distinctly) and if I recollect well, by Cicero in one of his letters to Atticus.

tributed to that nice sense of freedom, which the constitution of our country is calculated to inspire. We have judged it expedient to compel every man to unfold the means by which his expences are furnished. Why should it not be also an unchangeable principle of policy, that every individual be required in stormy and calamitous times, to avow the opinion by which his conduct is regulated? Such a law indeed, might cause among those persons who are entrenched within the retreats of affected prudence, no small degree of trouble and anxiety, but it would occasion a great advancement of truth, knowledge, and freedom. It would appal the licentious, and sanction the efforts of the magistrate. For the public safety is not injured by those who assemble in public meetings, and advance doctrines couched in the spirit of error, but by those who never shew their faces among the people, who never publicly avow any opinions, who temporize always with the predominant party, and who undulate from one side to the other, as the hurricane of popular opinion blows them. From

such men alas! the country can have no hopes, nor can it repose any kind of dependence upon them; for like Proteus, they assume a thousand different shapes, proportioned to their selfish principles, their interests, or their views.

But if these observations were not of themselves sufficient to animate individuals to a sense of their duty, the melancholy state of the country would of itself be an adequate motive. Those who have been in the habit of opposing the measures of administration, have retired in disgust. They assert, that their remonstrances have made no impression on the legislative body, and that therefore it was no longer necessary for them to brave the buffetings of arrogance, and the hootings of folly. But against honest men invectives and calumny are the strongest tests of public merit; they are only make-weights to a bad cause; whereas truth is of such simplicity, that it disdains to call in the aid of abuse and railing, to substantiate its demonstrations. Phocion, applauded by the assembled multitude of Athens,

very

very properly asked a person who stood by him, if he had committed a fault? It remains therefore to be seen, whether in quitting a station, which they had dignified by their eloquence, their talents, and their perseverance; opposition have conducted themselves more for their own interest and glory, or for the interest and glory of the nation.

When i affirm that there is yet a chance of saving the country, i assume it as a principle that it is to be done, not by resorting to abstract speculations, but to the spirit of the constitution, which is fully adequate to every emergency. It is this spirit, to which our forefathers always adverted, in times of peril, and disturbance. If by any observations which are made in the following sheets, any persons should be reclaimed from error, and recalled to a sense of loyalty and patriotism, i shall have given the antidote to the poison, which, by some, i am charged with having disseminated. Neither shall i be accused of want of forbearance and moderation,

when

when my sentiments breathe nothing but the spirit of concord and unanimity.

These are my pretensions; and as they appear to me satisfactory, i should have thought myself highly blameable, if, after this conviction, I had withheld my opinions for a moment. Silence is culpable pusillanimity, when the voice of despair is heard from every side. My services can extend no further at present. But the day will shortly come, when i shall be enabled to shew a more active zeal in the support of the glorious fabric of British Freedom. Four months hence the prison doors must be opened to me, and without ostentation i can conscientiously say, that i shall be found as ready and willing to shed my blood in defence of the King and Constitution of my country, as i now feel impelled to call around them both, the combined strength of the nation. If therefore, like a spectre, escaped from the cold chambers of death, in which it hath long been entombed, i stalk for a few seconds on that world which i had once known,

and

and hold converse with those beings whose happiness was the most desireable object of my heart; let it be remembered, that i rise not for the purpose of exciting alarm and division, but to promote conciliation and union. If this happy end be atchieved, i shall return with joy to the still shades of captivity, where i hope to remain undisturbed, till those things

done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purg'd away.

As i deem the above remarks a sufficient apology for the liberty i have taken in addressing you at this time, i have only to intreat your indulgence for my errors and misapprehensions, and to request you to attend to the matter, more than to the manner of the following observations. In all considerations directed to safety, there are three questions which deserve our most serious attention.

1. What have we been doing?
2. What are we doing?
3. What ought we to do?

My

My attention will be strictly confined to these three propositions, on the right comprehension and resolution of which, our hopes of security and independence entirely rest.

1. What have we been doing?

It will not be necessary for the exemplification of this question, that we should refer to a more remote period than to the beginning of the year, 1793, because to that calamitous epoch, we must date the original of that long, unbroken train of misfortunes which has befallen our country. Subsequent events prove the truth of this assertion. Great Britain is at once a prey to her declared adversaries and professed friends. She has numbered among her mercenaries, an emperor, several kings, and German potentates, whom she hired to assist her in overthrowing the independence of another people. Had those fruitless subsidies been saved, had the national revenue been applied with cconomy to national purposes; had it been employed

in

in liquidating gradually the public incumbrances, in augmenting the navy, improving manufactures and agriculture, encouraging and securing the colonies, and extending trade and navigation; corruption would have become altogether unnecessary, and the spirit of disaffection would have vanished; the people would have been eased of their burthens, and consequently they would have ceased to complain; commerce would have flourished in its fullest maturation, and produced such affluence as must have raised Great Britain to the highest pinnacle of maritime power. She would have been dreaded as well as respected by her enemies, and revered by her neighbors; oppressed nations would have crept under her wings for protection, and contending powers would have appealed to her decision as the universal arbitress of Europe.

How different alas! is her present situation; her debts enormous, her taxes almost intolerable, her people discontented, and the sinews of her government relaxed! By involving herself rashly

in foreign quarrels, she has lavished her substance with the most dangerous and culpable precipitation; she is even deserted by her wonted vigor, steadiness, and public spirit; she grows vain, fantastical, and mutinous; her national credit is on the decline; her arms are despised by her enemies, and her councils ridiculed throughout all Europe.

Such is the striking condition of our affairs both without, and within the kingdom. Would to God, that the picture i have drawn was the emanation only of a warm imagination. But it is a lamentable truth, that there is not a single portion of the above statement which is not correct, and demonstrable by the most substantial and conclusive evidence.

Before the commencement of the present conflict; it may be said without exaggeration, that the administration of this country, had surmounted all the difficulties which the American struggle had occasioned; and had brought

us to the most elevated pitch of national prosperity and commercial glory. Some time before that disastrous period, i had frequent opportunities of observing the opinions of well informed men in various parts of Europe, both on our political and commercial situation. And i found them unanimous in their sentiments respecting our great advancement in wealth, strength, and security. The name of Pitt, which in the person of Lord Chatham, had made all Europe tremble, reflected additional glory on his son, and rendered him, as well by his own merit, as by the sanction of that great name, both feared and respected abroad. It would have been fortunate, perhaps, for his country, if, together with this borrowed lustre, he had united to his own great abilities, the forbearance as well as the firmness of his father.

This condition of security might have been continued, if, like Denmark and Sweden, we had maintained an armed neutrality, and preserved towards France, the accustomed relations

of peace and amity. Too confident in our own strength and resources, and relying on that free spirit, which in former times had made us powerful and victorious over the armies of despotism, we rashly concluded, that it would support us with equal energy, in overthrowing the arms of liberty. What a strange infatuation was this! Ought we not on the contrary, to have learnt wisdom from the experience of ages, and to have discovered that the struggles of nations, for what they call their freedom, have been almost universally successful? If small communities, such as Greece, Switzerland, and the United Provinces, have been capable of defeating the projects, and of humbling the pride of the most powerful states; what might we not have expected from the exertions of twenty five millions of men, marshalled together under one banner, and fighting together in one common cause? It required no spirit of divination to foretell the eventful issue. The reason is obvious. Liberty, is organized power; and whatever people call it to their aid, have every reason

reason to hope for final success. We however made no profit from the admonitions of history; but, we rushed blindly into the conflict, without enquiring into the probability of success, and without calculating on the consequences that might attend on disappointment.

From the remarks which have been made above, it is evident that we may ascribe to the present war, a great part of the distresses, under which we labor. I have said a part only; for there are other causes which tho' deeper hidden, have produced misfortunes and blemishes, not less extensive and pernicious. The war indeed, is the prominent cause of aggravated ills, and therefore it is to it, as to a common source, that we are most apt to refer, in order to dislodge reflection from our minds. Other sources however of national distemper prevailed long before the war was heard of. It is true that like a hot bed, it has contributed to forward their vegetation, and an unsuccessful war more especially, has most fatally brought them to maturity.

It

It would be very injudicious, in a tract professedly written to allay our mutual dissensions, were i to enter at all upon a subject, which has been so often and so ably examined by men of the first rank, and talents in the nation. One fact however, must not be omitted; because it proves that the charges of corruption that are now brought against that portion of the legislative body which has uniformly voted in support of this war, come with a very ill grace from those, whose infatuation originally excited it. It is not to our representatives alone, that we are to ascribe our present calamities; no, we owe them to ourselves, because we sanctioned the war by the authority of public opinion. Artifice, it is true, may have been employed to delude, but this is no extenuation of the folly of the deluded. The circumstance, is indeed, a great and serious advantage, which the opponents of all popular encroachments, have obtained over those who espouse the cause of popular freedom. For it confirms in a great measure, that habitual prejudice, which denies the right of opinion to great

great portions of the people. And it gives color to the arguments of those who maintain that the people collectively cannot think, but who, as in the present instance, do not hesitate to profit by their voice, when it serves to uphold their interests, or to support their ambition.

The pulse of the nation had been felt some time before the war commenced; and in the addresses, tendering lives and fortunes, which were poured in from every quarter of the kingdom, we may easily discern that it beat high, to sacrifice both. The public mind had also been directed to a great abhorrence of all political innovations. We were taught to consider the events that were operating in France, as an awful warning to great Britain; and all the inflammable gas, which is said to have been dispersed about the country, we were to consider as issuing from that monstrous Jacobin Forge at Paris; the lava of which threatened subversion to the innocence of our fields, and to the tranquillity of our cities.

The

The temper of the people having thus been brought to make a generous proffer of their lives and fortunes, it is not to be wondered at, that administration, who thought exactly as they did, should willingly accept of both. That they have made no sparing use of either, our empty purses, and a widowed nation, render i believe, indisputable. Never since the time of those celebrated Crusades, when folly, intolerance, and cruelty united, to sweep Syria of its infidel inhabitants, have there been discovered such fury and unanimous zeal, among one people to extirpate another, as in this terrible war, which we, in concert with the other regular powers of Europe, have waged against the irregular republic of France. The only difference between the two occasions consists in this; that the one was conducted in an age of barbarism, ignorance, and superstition; the other, in an æra, when society had received its highest polish, and urbanity and laws flourished in their fullest vigor.

Whether in consequence of that unanimity,
administration

administration were bound to engage in the war, it is not my intention to examine, because it would be foreign to my purpose to revive a controversy that has since divided the nation and consequently impaired its strength. The opinion of a whole people may be erroneous; they may feel disposed to rush upon projects, which it would be the duty of their governors to resist. Many instances might be brought from history in support of this truth. It has been repeatedly bruited in our ears that the voice of the people is the voice of God. If the proposition be referable to the possession of strength and to the power of using it, the propriety of the application cannot be denied. But if it be intended to convey to our minds notions of justice, it is not only incorrect, but on many occasions can be proved to be false. Politicians commonly ascribe to the people goodness of intention, but they have not failed at the same time to inform us, that this amiable principle has often been diverted to the most iniquitous purposes. Could we trace out in the history of popular opin-

ions, no deviations in the line of moral rectitude, no fallies of passion, no wanderings of ambitious phrenzy, we should be justified in paying homage to their judgment, and even in obeying their mandates. But the contrary is the fact: in the red list of human crimes, they appear the prominent and distinguished actors in the worse and most tragic scenes. There are many illustrious examples on record, of the benevolence of the *sovereign people*, but there are more of their crimes. Hence the comic poet of Greece,* who knew them well, has justly branded them with the title of **TREMENDOUS TYRANT.**

It would not surprize me, if the above remarks were to be censured, as aristocratical. Let them be so; they are nevertheless true. It is painful to be obliged to pass so severe a condemnation on the judgment of the people; but the man who scorns to flatter the passions of the multitude, must hold on the tenor of his way equally regardless of their censure, or their approbation, their flattery, or their frowns.

There

* Aristophanes, Eq. v. 4.

There is something inexpressibly odious in the character of a demagogue. He must be a hypocrite; if he would maintain his post, he must dissemble his own opinions to gratify the caprice of those whom he fancies he rules, but who in fact are his rulers. He must be ready at all times to be the minister of carnage, and the executioner of the virtuous; while he holds his power but by a brittle tenure, fluctuating with the winds of popular effervescence, and liable to be dissipated by a breath of popular indignation. Whatever scenes his fervid imagination may design, must not be slightly sketched, but boldly finished. He must not be dismayed by compunctions of conscience, nor by puny considerations of morality. These only tend to spoil business. Deaf to the cries of innocence, and unmoved by the "compunctionous visitings of nature," he must beguile away every tender sentiment, for what is called the immutability of principles; and after having deluded others, he must proceed to delude himself, and to do ill that good may arise from it. He must affect

power and popularity; under the garb of innocence, he must possess all the qualities of a rufian, and like Alcibiades, fawn, flatter, and trim with the times; *temporibus callidissime inserviens.* This is the character of the man of the people. We cannot avoid pitying the virtuous mind which is thus seduced from honorable pursuits, and made the slave of vanity and of crime. The serious responsibility which attaches to a character of this sort, has no charms for any one who really loves independence. It is surely better to rot in jail, or to perish on a scaffold, than to deceive for the poor gratification of a moments applause, or to lie for the sake of power; for every man, who, by any means acquires the favorable prepossession of another, obtains, power. But, our conduct ought unceasingly to be regulated by the decision of the inward man, and like Aristides, we should even suffer ourselves to be hated, because we are just.

These observations are by no means intended to cast any dishonorable insinuation against the real

real and disinterested patriot, or against opinions that originate from the people. On the contrary, whatever comes from them, ought to be regarded with respect and attention. Government was constituted for the paternal purpose of facilitating their views when founded in wisdom and justice, but to check and control them, when prompted by licentiousness and folly. Hence we may infer, that the popular sanction did not render the war expedient. It might be *legitimate*, but not *just*.

In forming our judgments on the necessity of any war, we should distinguish between its *justifying* reasons, and its *motives*. The first, are those which render, or seem to render, the war just with respect to the enemy, so that in taking arms against him, we do not think we commit injustice. The motives, are the views of interest, which determine our resolution. This accurate distinction has been further developed by public lawyers,* in their frequent references to historical

facts

* Grotius de Jur. Bell. I. 2. c. 22. §. 2. and Burlemaqui Droit Public p. 4. c. 2. §. 3.

facts. Thus, in the war that Alexander waged against Darius, his *justifying reason* was to revenge the injuries which the Grecian people had received from the Persians. The *motives* were, the ruthless ambition, and unbounded vanity of that conqueror, who took up arms the more cheerfully, as the fortunate expeditions of Xenophon and Agesilaus, made him conceive lofty hopes of a successful invasion of the Persian empire. The justifying reason of the second Punic war, was a dispute respecting the city of Saguntum. The motives were an old grudge entertained by the Carthaginians against the Romans, for the hard terms, to which they were obliged to submit when reduced to a low condition, and the encouragement given them by the success of their arms in Spain.

It is totally immaterial, in this place, to inquire *who* voted for the war, or *who* voted against it; as the answer would only lead to altercation and mutual strife. Our object is to discover in what manner we can extricate ourselves

selves from the difficulties, into which our rashness and imprudence have involved us. To do this with any hope of success, we must inquire into those reasons and motives which prompted us to engage in the war. Our justifying reasons were, the defence of Holland, *then* our ally; the preservation of the balance of power in Europe; the maintenance of the religion, civil order, and laws of every established government. Hence, it was judged expedient to *attempt* (and the event has fully proved that it was nothing but an attempt) to crush the republican system of France, and to repel the admission of principles, which held the sword of Damocles suspended over the head of every man of property, and which by the contagion of example, aimed at the annihilation of our internal polity and discipline. Let us now briefly enquire if we have acted in uniformity with the principles, on which we originally and ostensibly commenced hostilities.

Passing over the haughty and contemptuous manner

manner in which M. Chauvelin was dismissed, and the indiscreet refusal of the terms of accommodation proposed at a subsequent period, by the executive council of France, we ought as an evidence of the integrity of our principles to enquire into the manner in which the war has been conducted.

When in the year 1793, the French army had been driven out of Holland and the Netherlands, it was obvious, that the principal ostensible cause of the war had been removed. It might then have been expected that propositions of peace would have followed the footsteps of victory, and that our brave army would have been recalled in order to maintain tranquillity within, and independence without the kingdom. But alas! in the raptures of victory, nations are not disposed to think on peace. The distracted state of France held out dazzling invitations to ambition, avarice, and plunder. Europe therefore was to witness an extraordinary aberration from all morality, and to contemplate the spirit of

of rash adventure, pervading the councils, and directing the actions of the combined powers. It was destined to view that confederacy which had loudly remonstrated against the system of aggrandizement that was supposed to animate the decisions of France, acting themselves upon the very same system, and eagerly pursuing it by force of arms. This observation is applicable to all the parties in hostility with the French republic; and the proofs of its truth, may be found in the ambiguous declarations, and contradictory manifestoes, which were issued at various times in the course of that year, by the chiefs of the confederate armies; by Brunswick and Hohenloe on one side, by the duke of York and Saxe-Cobourg on another, and by Lord Hood in the name of the British government at Toulon. Proud of our early successes, we disdained to treat with a discomfited enemy, when our good fortune would have obtained for us, equitable and honorable conditions of peace; but, in furtherance of those ambitious projects, which we disavowed at the commencement of the war, we augmented our continental

continental force, and improvidently resolved to stake even our existence on the issue of the contest. Thus, visions of glory haunted our distempered imaginations, and continued to feed them, until we perceived France, recover from her internal convulsions, and point the bursting passions of domestic parties, against her public enemies. It was then that we began to lower the tone of arrogant presumption, and to doubt of the probability of ultimate success. It was then that the arithmetic of the counter, which had so long tickled the national vanity, was laid aside, and the more sober reflections of the politician assumed. But this change of sentiment slowly traversed the country, or was not honestly avowed. It has been since advanced as an apology for silence, that terror palsied the minds of men, and prevented the free publication of their opinions. If this be true, it may excuse our prudent selfishness, but it will not remove from us the imputation of cowardice. But, is a frigate taken from the enemy? we immediately recover from our despondency, and repair our confidence in administration. Is

Robespierre fallen? we fancy we perceive monarchy springing forth from his tomb. Does an extraordinary gazette announce the capture of a colony? the tower and park guns are immediately fired, bonfires illuminate our former gloom, and dissipate our anxieties. Does the Austrian eagle fly over the ruined fortresses of liberty? we cajole ourselves with the idea of the subjugation of France; doubt and hesitation are dispelled, and there is an instantaneous reflux of popular opinion. Amid this vivacious and hasty spirit of expectancy, we pourtray all the ridiculous alarms of imbecility. Our versatility is as pitiable as our folly, when every little incident of official chicanery, in the progress of a destructive war, serves as a barometer to express to Europe, our fears and hopes, and the rise and depression of our spirits. On one day, we present ourselves in the abject posture of humiliation and despair; on the next, we frolic with the bauble which we have purchased with our best blood, and assume the face of exultation and of joy. Capricious in folly, dejected in

defeat, and insolent in victory, we effectually realize the sentiment of a foreigner on our national characteristic, that we are always either in the cellar or in the garret. Full of contrivances in little things, and resorting in great ones to shift, trick, and expedient, instead of recurring to enlarged and liberal measures of policy, we endeavour by every wretched species of political empiricism and sophistry, to buoy up the spirits, and to sustain the fading glory of a great empire. If a question on some insignificant point of form be agitated, it is debated with all the pomp of eloquence, and solemnity of discussion; constitutional precedents are invoked, and the fountain of constitutional freedom explored. But if the fate of millions and the liberties of mankind be before us, we lose our rationality; we sink beneath the pressure of jarring opinions; we resign our privilege of thought to others, and we stupidly nod assent to those idols, for whose political wisdom and foresight, we entertain the highest veneration. If we be beaten from one ground of argument, we take up speedily a new position with

with admirable dexterity. Our political evolutions have nothing of the mastery of generalship in them; they seem more calculated for exercises, from which future politicians are to deduce regulations of civil wisdom. But our ingenuity in the invention and assignment of causes of action, is as fertile and progressive as our calamities. If a sense of religion, order, and laws, be not sufficient to impel us to action; we are then alarmed for the safety of our constitution. Sometimes we are fighting for the sake of peace and amity, sometimes for kings, sometimes for the people, sometimes against French assignats, then for the good of the French nation, sometimes for the Protestant religion, then for the Popish, sometimes for the preservation of the balance of power, sometimes for colonial slavery, sometimes for any thing, for nothing, but at no time for ourselves. All these have had their day, and have afforded us much topic for political conversation and blind confidence. One farthing candle is no sooner burnt out, than another is lighted; until our whole stock is at length exhausted,

exhausted, and the last miserable relic of light is dying away in the socket. It is in this manner, we have suffered our understandings to be bewildered, and our passions to be seduced; and this course would have been uninterrupted, if events of an unexpected and most alarming nature, had not brought us to a just sense of our perilous situation. Our wavering and doubtful policy has given to the enemy a decided advantage, and enabled them to defeat our plans, and to triumph over us, as well by the pen as by the sword. It has afforded them frequent opportunities of remonstrating against *our* spirit of ambition and aggrandizement, and of exposing to all Europe *our* departure from principle, and our forgetfulness of the *justifying reasons* on which we engaged in the war. From this species of "*moral guilt*" however, there are two distinguished exceptions. Earl Fitzwilliam is the only man in the British Senate, and Mr. Burke the only one out of it (of any note) who have steadily adhered to their original pretensions. These men have unceasingly preached the necessity of continuing the

the Crusade, and reprobated every proposition of peace, that is not to be accompanied by the *good old order* of things in France. They may therefore, justly boast of *their* political consistency. It is true, men may be consistent in error, as well as in what is right; and the stubborn, pertinacious reservation of a false system, may be as great a proof of human prejudice, dotage, and folly, as the abandonment of a corrupt principle, is an indubitable evidence of integrity, good sense, and judgment.

To this political tergiversation, we ought to ascribe the greater part of our disappointments. The nation has ever been in perplexity and in ignorance of the real motives of administration in the continuance of the war. Unanimity can never be expected from fallacious or unsettled reasons of conduct. If we had been honestly dealt by, we should have been fully instructed in the objects for which we were to contend; in order that combining every force, our exertions might have been commensurate to the

arduousness

arduousness of the conflict. But it seems, investigation was dreaded, and passive confidence all that was required. We were in enmity with each other, and our political differences engendered persecution, the most baneful disease that can afflict a troubled state. By our divisions, the administration acquired unparalleled strength, and identified themselves in the very foil of the Constitution. To object against their conduct was a symptom of disaffection; to dispute their pretensions was the act of Jacobinism; and to decry their plans was to revile against the Constitution, on which they had impudently engrafted themselves. Thus, administration and the Constitution were held out to us as indivisible, and a respectful but full silence reigned throughout the country. It was thus, they gained over the opinions of men, and proceeded triumphantly in their phætonic career; taking care at the same time, to deaden the voice of political reprobation, because "men love darkness rather than light when their deeds are evil."

These

These remarks would have been unnecessary, if we did not feel at this time, the effects of that misguided and pernicious system, which has been so often and so unprofitably exposed and reprobated. In no instance whatever, has our misconduct appeared more prominent and more aggravated, than in the encouragement which we gave to the royalists of France, and in our cruel abandonment of their cause, in the hour of distress and misfortune. In consequence of those prospects of succor and protection, which were held out to them from Britain; they continued in open rebellion against the constituted authority of the republic, and made every sacrifice that could possibly be expected from the combined efforts of sincerity, fanaticism, and desperation. But, they discovered, when it was too late, that we sported with their integrity, mocked at their generous schemes, and proved ourselves unfaithful to the promises which we had repeatedly made to them. When they fondly imagined that they were supported by a rock of adamant, they found themselves smothered in an heap of sand. They

perceived us modify our principles and actions, and with our accustomed ingenuity, renounce them according to "existing circumstances;" that is, when discomfiture rendered them no longer apparently tenable. They perceived us deny at one moment, what we avowed at another, and avow again what we had before denied. They perceived us coalesce in projects, which aimed, not at the restoration of the internal quiet of France, but at its spoliation, dismemberment, and ruin. From men thus egregiously affronted, we had indeed little to expect. The event has shewn that we fomented a spirit which we had not well contemplated, and which, at the critical juncture, we had not the magnanimity, though we possessed the power, to cherish and to support. Bereft of all hope, and exposed by the allies to a most wretched fate; they were reduced to the sad alternative, of braving alone and unsupported, the thunder of republican vengeance, or of throwing themselves upon its clemency and forgiveness. The most agonizing sensations that ever convulsed and tortured the mind,

were .

were to be felt by the deserted Vendean. They were to sustain the conflict of many discordant passions: hope, fear, anger, mortification, resentment, shame, remorse, with a wounded honor and an injured reputation, were the feelings to be subdued before they could meet the frowns or the caresses of the vengeful republic. A melancholy experience of the infidelity of the allies, engendered a distrust of their future assistance, and directed the return of the royalists to obedience and tranquillity. They hastened therefore, to reunite themselves to their country, and to enlist under its standards against those powers which had always proffered, and as often betrayed their friendship. Indeed, the rebellion of La Vendée was considered by the allies in no other light than as an useful diversion. Their minds were intent on other objects, of more immediate importance to their interests, than the stale pretences of religion, civil order and laws. The *manner* in which the war has been pursued, proves the truth of this observation. It was a curious spectacle, though by no means unexampled, to

see a formidable confederacy, affecting to act for the best interests of mankind, violate every principle of faith and justice by which alone, those interests can be upheld. Our former allusion recurs again upon us; and we cannot avoid noticing the marked similitude of the Crusade in the beginning of the twelfth, and the Crusade at the close of the eighteenth century. They were both actuated by a kind of military phrenzy; and when the princes of Europe marched to the Holy Land in order to cut the throats of the infidels for the glory of God, they provided at the same time, for the future enjoyment of the crowns, principalities, and provinces of Syria, which they parcelled out among themselves, as the rewards of their pious zeal.

In all confederacies formed by independent states for the purpose of warfare, we are naturally led to expect unity of design. There is no fair presumption that each power will act agreeably to its individual interest, but on the contrary, we are authorized in looking for an absolute

absolute renunciation of all selfish motives, in favor of the general principle. The application of this reasoning, is beyond all competition, necessary in a war professedly undertaken on principles, not of ambition and aggrandizement, but of reason and equity. In the *ordinary* disputes of empires, we rarely suppose any confederacy to be actuated by disinterested motives. The pages of history are filled with the melancholy accounts of scenes of carnage and misery, which are often brought upon nations by the restless spirit, or contemptible brawls of their rulers. Some antiquated claim is revived, or some doubtful cause of injury started, in order to excite men to mutual destruction. From such wars, where the *motives* preponderate more than the *justifying reasons*, we have only to wait for the period, when the contending parties have mutually butchered and exhausted each other, in order to enjoy the return of peace, and to view the breathless combatants retire within their own confines, and end generally where they began. But, in a war of principle; in a war which

commenced

commenced ostensibly for the preservation of every thing that is respectable and dear to social man ; to suppose that any object of ambition or avarice could sway the policy of the confederates, would be to libel the integrity of old governments, and to offer the best apology for the zeal and intrepidity of the new government of France. If the arguments that were alledged at the time the war broke out were *then* true, they must be so *now*; and if they were cogent enough to justify its commencement, they are equally so in favor of its continuation. Or, it must be shewn, that we have fully obtained the objects for which we fought; in which case, we may inquire with propriety *for what* we are now at war? By whatever subtlety and special pleading the question is resolved, it will be found still to involve us in palpable absurdities. By what strange fatality has it happened, that all the parties of this once formidable confederacy, have dismembered themselves from it one after another, and left England with poor Portugal our Sancho Panza in this Quixot adventure,

venture, to cope with an enemy invigorated by the submission of all Europe, and rich in conquest and liberty? It is in vain to conceal the truth any longer. It was not a departure from moral principle which led to their secession. No! it was the want of all principle in the beginning, that defeated their projects, and blasted their hopes in the progress of the war. It was because their actions were not in unison with their public motives, and because their public and private morality were at variance. It was because the spirit of fraud, ambition, and tyranny was apparent, and the confederacy deviated from their original pretensions, threw off the mask, and assumed the aspect of a Conspiracy of the few, embodied against the rights and liberties of the many. Tuscany, indeed, which was bullied into the league, is an exception to this remark. But the secession of the great powers can be no otherwise accounted for, than by ascribing their conduct throughout, to a selfish, perfidious, partitioning, and guilty ambition. They have all become the victims of their own folly; they have
disciplined

disciplined the French in their principles of aggression and division; and they have found them become ready pupils, and able political casuists. By the infamous treaties of Pilnitz and of Pavia, and by the nefarious annihilation of Poland, they taught the French how to respect that balance of power, for the support of which, they had called all Europe to arms. With what propriety then can they conscientiously reprobate the conduct of France in the hour of victory, when in a similar situation they disregarded that moderation which prosperity ought to have inspired?

There have been great confederacies in the world, which have benefited mankind, and terminated with glory to those who were concerned in them. But they had justice for their principle, and freedom for their object. Some Persons may have acted on these occasions from selfish motives, (for where shall we find a good cause which has not bad men sometimes engaged in its behalf?) but the generality

nerality were found, and influenced merely by considerations of utility and justice. Among various confederacies of this sort, there are two examples pre-eminently illustrious. I allude to the combination of protestant princes at the time of the Reformation of religion, and to the grand alliance of King William III. for the purpose of diminishing the exorbitant power, and overgrown dominion of Louis XIV. If the members of those confederacies promoted their several ambitious views, they were not atchieved at the expence of the whole. They were always affected with a steady regard to the original cause, and to the general safety. Thus while they provided for the common welfare, they gratified their own ambition; but they did not render the former, subservient to the particular views of the latter. Selfishness was placed by the side of principle; and interest and public spirit were never at variance. Their exertions were crowned with glory and with success, because to the dignity of their struggles, they united all the disinterested moderation, all the comprehensive wisdom, and

all the elevated virtues that were necessary to such magnanimous undertakings. In the course of emotions and efforts so extensive and considerable, occasional evils arose, and cast a transient gloom over the labors of genius, virtue, and patriotism. But their effects were by no means potent enough to damp the courage, or to impede the generous ardor of the confederates. From the order and the laws of our nature, it perpetually happens that advantages are mingled with misfortune. The conflicts which led to a purer religion while they excite, under one aspect, the liveliest transports of joy, create, in another, a mournful sentiment of sympathy and compassion. Amidst the felicities which were obtained, and the trophies which were won, we deplore the melancholy ravages of the passions, and weep over the ruins of ancient magnificence. But while the contentions and the ferments of men, even in the road to intellectual improvement and excellence are ever destined to be polluted with mischief and blood; a tribute of the highest panegyric and praise is yet justly to be paid to the actors

in

in the Reformation. They gave way to the movements of a liberal and a resolute spirit. They taught the rulers of nations, that the obedience of the subject is the child of justice, and that men must be governed by their opinions and their reason. Their magnanimity is illustrated by great and conspicuous exploits; which, at the same time that they awaken admiration, are an example to support and animate virtue in the hour of trial and peril. The existence of civil liberty was deeply connected with the doctrines for which they contended and fought. While they treated with scorn an abject and a cruel superstition, and lifted and sublimed the dignity of man, by calling his attention to a simpler and a wiser theology, they were strenuous to give a permanent security to their political constitutions. The happiest and the best interests of society were the objects for which *they* buckled on their armour; and to wish and to act for their duration, and stability, are perhaps the most important employments of patriotism and public virtue.

But, in the confederacy of 1793, the principles and conduct of the parties, were in a state of irreconcileable variance. The most laborious research cannot unravel the mysteries of *their* politics. They appear to have been influenced by no general plan, and to have had in contemplation, no determinate end. We need no further information on this head, than what arises from the examination of their behaviour on various occasions, when intoxicated with good fortune, and off their guard, they exposed their designs and betrayed their projects in the face of an indignant world. When Valenciennes capitulated to the British General, it was taken possession of, not in the British name, or in the names of religion, civil order, and laws, but in the name and for the sake of the Emperor and King. When Toulon was delivered into the hands of the British Admiral, it was done on the express stipulations, that he should hold it *in trust* for the *French* King, and in behalf of the exploded Constitution of 1791. When the colonial establishments of France in the East and

West

West Indies surrendered to the resolute courage and persevering ardor of the British forces, they were taken possession of, in the name of his Majesty, the King of Great Britain. Thus, we have practically falsified our professions in the eyes of all Europe. In Flanders our plan of hostility seemed to denote, that we were in league with the continental despots, for the purpose of blotting France out of the map of Europe. In the Mediteranean, we pursued a course diametrically opposite; our military arrangements were calculated to enable France, to preserve her dignity unimpaired in the society of European nations, by the establishment of an ameliorated Constitution, founded on the broad basis of popular freedom, with the colossal statue of limited monarchy in its center, invigorating by its presence, protecting by its influence, and refreshing by its equity, the millions whose liberty and happiness it was intended to promote. In traversing the vast Atlantic and the Indian Ocean, we forgot all the *good principles*, which regulated our policy in Europe. We manœuvred with

selfish

selfish dexterity on that element, which has ever borne us to victory and to glory; we conquered the French settlements, and took possession of them not for the common cause, but for our contractors and speculators at home, who in loudly vociferating for a war of extermination, could only be fed with the offals of despotism and corruption. Does conduct like this, imply integrity of principle, and unity of design? Or, can any sober man, who is not harnessed in the yoke of prejudice, say, that this is a war of principle? If it be, tell me what is not a war of principle.

If on the other hand, we look for consistency among our good and faithful allies, we have only to turn our eyes to Prussia, fighting by our side, (as it always has fought, and as it always will fight) for what it could get: to Russia, punctually sending us its quota of ships, and as punctually recalling them home, after they had been duly victualled and refitted in our Ports, and at our expence. We were long amused with the idea of a Russian army joining the confederates on the banks

banks of the Rhine, and in a war of extermination, better instruments of destruction could certainly no where be found. It is true a Russian army did come, but it was an army of paper manifestoes. The woman of the North, was not so ignorant of the human character, as to expect that the cold machinery of military despotism, would long resist the fury and impetuousness of national resentment, enthusiasm, and liberty. She was not so impolitic as to engage in a scheme of warfare, which, independently of its remoteness from her icy domains, held out only delusive and flattering prospects of advantage to those who had engaged in it. She was not so improvident of her great reputation as to throw it into the lottery of chance, by sacrificing positive security to ideal profits. In all the plans of aggrandizement, which were embraced by her capacious mind, there was always a regularity of system, a correctness of arrangement, and a depth of calculation. If she had united to her mighty mind, those great moral qualities, without which talents and empire are dangerous enjoyments, she would

would have eclipsed the fame of the Trajans and the Antonines of Antiquity, nations would have abandoned that odious prejudice, which gives the palm of superiority to men alone, and they would have sighed after the mild rule of females. This woman could hide deep in the cell of memory, the most extensive projects of human ambition, mew over them for years with ferocious fondness, and patiently await the moment, when in the disorder of things, the success of her schemes were reduced to moral certainty. It was then the busy mind exploded its vast designs, and the hellhounds of carnage were unmuzzled; it was then, bursting from her mountains of snow, she filled the world with blood, and covered its inhabitants with mourning. All of her tragedy pieces were complete in plan, time, and execution; and they were as prompt, decisive and funereal, as they were deeply meditated, and often wickedly conceived. With the blood of Ishmael smoaking around her, she kept aloof from the theatre of war, recruiting her strength, smiling over the wild waste of desolated

solated Europe, and counting the future victims of her murderous ambition.

It has been stated above,* that the civil war of La Vendée, was considered by the allies, only in the light of an advantageous diversion, not as a principled insurrection. As that war appears to me, to have been the most serious, with which the Republic had to contend, and as i know it was more dreaded by those who then directed her affairs, than the efforts of all the combined powers, it will be proper before i proceed, to demonstrate the truth of the proposition. By this mean, the unprincipled conduct, and premeditated guilt of the allies, will be established by the most unequivocal evidence.

In the disastrous § year of 1793, this was the position of France. The streets of the capital flowed with the blood of two violent parties, which were struggling not only for power but

H

for

* Page 45.

§ The reader need not be told that the word is referable to the Republic.

for life. The rich and populous city of Lyons, and the southern provinces had uplifted the banners of revolt. Toulon and the French navy in the Mediterranean were in the possession of a motley groupe of British, Piedmontese, Spanish, and Neapolitan forces. Valenciennes, Condé, and Quesnoi were in the hands of the Emperor, Mayence, after a long siege, surrendered to the Prussians, the whole of the Palatinate was recovered, and the allies had penetrated into the interior of Alsace, occupied the lines of Weissenburg, and blockaded Landau. The Northern army from its retreat out of Holland, route in the Netherlands, and subsequent defection of M. Dumourier, was in a state of such disorganization, as to be disabled from making any serious attempt to raise the siege of any of its fortresses.* Switzerland, by the skilful negociation of M. Weis, maintained a cold neutrality with

the

* General Ferrand, who defended Valenciennes, insisted upon this circumstance in his examination before the Committee of Public Safety, and its truth was admitted. The first blows of any consequence that were struck by the army of the North, were at Maubeuge, Dunkirk, and Hoond-schoote.

the Republic. The kingling of Sardinia kept the gates of Italy shut, and by the assistance of the *Virgin Mary's shift*,* and the Austrian troops, was advancing into Savoy. The Pope fulminated anathemas (*bruta fulmina*) from the Vatican, and the little tyrants of Italy § flocked around the ravenous Eagle of Austria. The Spanish had occupied several of the dismantled fortresses of the Pyrenees, and the British were endeavouring to starve twenty five millions of men into submission. The Empress of Russia *talked* a great deal about religion and monarchy; and the Royalists of La

H 2

Vendée

* His late majesty is said to have gone thro' the lines of his army with this precious relic of antiquity. There are nevertheless many persons who doubt whether shifts were in fashion among the Jews in the days of Herod.

§ The virtuous and amiable Sovereign of Tuscany is to be excepted from this title; not because he did not heartily concur in the war, but on account of the mildness of his government. I assert this from experience, having found his subjects generally contented and happy. The late conduct of the French towards him, has been truly jesuitical and villainous. The reader who wishes to be instructed in the science of modern diplomacy may refer to the State papers that passed between the Court of Tuscany and the British Minister (Lord Herbert, i think) where he will be greatly improved by the rules of decorum, politeness, and humanity, which are to be found in them.

Vendée, bravely fought for both, even under
the walls of Nantz.

What a dismal picture of external distress and internal horror is here exhibited! Without one friendly ally, without one ambassador from a foreign power to console her broken fortunes, without public credit, commerce, or fleet, with the demons of civil discord, shrieking over every province, and encompassed on all sides with the iron belt of armed myriads, the French Republic, was shut out from the rest of the world, and tossed to and fro' by the most terrible whirlwind that ever assailed the tranquillity of mankind. France literally vibrated on the precipice of destruction. No human sagacity seemed likely to save the country; her professed friends and secret well-wishers began to doubt of the probability of her success. But she found her best friends among her most declared adversaries. Their intoxication and folly, gave her time to breathe, and to recruit her spirits. While the allies were goading themselves almost to death in besieging the garrisoned

garrisoned towns, and making good the saying of old marshal Schomberg, that to attack France by her northern barrier was to take the beast by his horns; the French were allowed time to settle their internal differences, and the faction that afterwards laid Europe prostrate at the feet of the Republic, was enabled to subdue their competitors, and finally to possess themselves of the helm of empire. It was then the vessel of the state rode securely amid surrounding storms; it was then that united, furious, and indignant, the French people rose in a mass, and poured out their vengeance on the combined powers.

This ill-judged mode of warfare on the part of the allies, establishes the truth of my former observation, that the defection of La Vendée was considered as a diversion only. For, if they had been really actuated by a just desire to restore the internal tranquillity of France, they would not have hesitated to co-operate with the Vendeans, who were the most honest, and the most consistent

of

of all the belligerant parties. They wickedly contrived to foster in secrecy the eruptive diseases of France, while they were publicly inviting all Europe to unite against them, and were calling heaven and earth to witness the justice of their cause. But the tremendous convulsions of France were not to be composed by the iron rod of coercion. The more that country was divided within, the less would it be provided with strength and energy to grapple with her external foes. The policy of the confederates therefore, induced them to blow the fuel of civil commotion, in order, that the French people, exhausted by their internal feuds, and exasperated at the treasons which lurked among them, should close the scenes of havoc, by submitting to the mercy of the allies. In this case, the martial logic of the confederates, would have been speedily disclosed, and each would have secured that portion of territory, which was most contiguous to his own dominions, or most beneficial to his future schemes of ambition. The measures however, which they chose

for

for the accomplishment of their designs, were the best calculated to frustrate them. Although the floodgates of desolation had been widely opened in the pursuit of this abomination of all humanity, yet a superintending Providence, thwarted their designs and levelled them with the dust. Had they succeeded, the peace of the world, would have been disturbed for ages by the quarrels of the victors, and the days of Attila and of Ghenzhiz-Khan would have been revived; the habit of bloodshed would have banished all the distinctive marks of modern urbanity, and substituted in its place, a barbarous and ferocious spirit of hostility. The din of arms would have resounded from every quarter, and the fertile plains of Europe, would have been converted into an horrid camp, a barren desolation. The moment, therefore, that their destructive principles became manifest, the murmurs of indignation were heard, and the spirit of union re-animated the councils of France. The people of La Vendée, over whose hideous and deformed country, humanity induces us to

throw

throw a veil, saw the English armaments directed against the colonies of France, and not to their support. They saw the British administration more disposed to sacrifice their blood and treasure to the havoc of a pestilential climate, than to the protection of the avowed advocates of religion and laws. They saw the mournful departure of the flower of the British forces, to a region where honor was to be reaped without advantage, and from whence, like the Athenians under Nicias at Syracuse, they were to return no more. To describe all the sensations and calamities which accompanied this rash adventure, would require the nervous and affecting pen of Thucydides.

We cannot be surprised, that the royalists should resent the injurious treatment they had experienced, and turn with indignation from men who promised without fulfilling, and who acted without discretion. The failure of the allies, must therefore, be attributed in a great degree to their own misconduct, of which there is not

a more distinguished feature, than their desertion of the unhappy royalists of France. If indeed, they had been vigorously supported, by a British army *exclusively*; accompanied too with the free spirit and generous characteristic of the nation, it is not improbable, but that they would have turned the scales of fortune, and while they established rational liberty in France, would have weeded it of that horde of sanguinary tyrants, which had too long, made it an *arena* of gladiators, a land of pillage, subversion and slaughter. But, the powers of Europe, were leagued together for other purposes. A constitutional monarchy, restricted by laws, would have been too formidable to purpled tyrants, and would have eventually shivered into pieces the sceptre of despotism. They preferred rather to restore the ancient system, or to riot on its ruins. They have failed in the attempt; and that attempt has produced a new phenomenon in the world. Rejecting a limited monarchy, they have made and consolidated a military Republic.

To these melancholy truths, we may add ano-

ther consideration of some importance, in the estimation of the confederates. They were not unconscious that the germs of French liberty first budded in Britanny, and that though many of the insurgents revolted against licentiousness and irreligion, there were few who fought for the chains of ancient servitude. They might picture to their imaginations, their country reformed and happy under the mild and equitable rule of a Patriot King, and under the observance of a Catholic faith, without Catholic intolerance. But they sighed not for the rebuilding of the Bastille, and the restoration of the dungeons of state, for the revival of Lettres de Cachet, of the Gabelle, and of all those barbarous feudal claims and incidents, which were borne in times of ignorance and barbarism, but which were intolerable in a liberal and enlightened age. The misconception of the motives of the royalists, has greatly contributed to the derangement of our plans. We have never sufficiently distinguished between the slaves of absolute, and the friends of limited monarchy; between those who acted under the impulse of base

base prejudice and despotism, and those who loved freedom with a monarch, but detested anarchy. There is no part of France more tranquil at this moment, than the fertile district of La Vendée; and the reason is apparent. The royalists took up arms for their religion, security and happiness, which had been invaded by a band of sacrilegious demagogues; they looked for assistance to those great military powers which affected to be in arms for the same cause, but they received none. This gave the republic a propitious opportunity of removing unfavorable prepossessions, and of reconciling them to obedience of its laws. The government held a Convention with the chiefs of the insurgents; it promised security of religion and forgiveness of the past. Those husbandmen, the most innocent class of human society, were undeceived in the intentions of the French, and consequently returned to their homes. The total pacification of La Vendée ensued; and two legions have been since formed for the defence of the country, from among those very men who were a little time before in arms against it. In this

ther consideration of some importance, in the estimation of the confederates. They were not unconscious that the germs of French liberty first budded in Britanny, and that though many of the insurgents revolted against licentiousness and irreligion, there were few who fought for the chains of ancient servitude. They might picture to their imaginations, their country reformed and happy under the mild and equitable rule of a Patriot King, and under the observance of a Catholic faith, without Catholic intolerance. But they sighed not for the rebuilding of the Bastille, and the restoration of the dungeons of state, for the revival of Lettres de Cachet, of the Gabelle, and of all those barbarous feudal claims and incidents, which were borne in times of ignorance and barbarism, but which were intolerable in a liberal and enlightened age. The misconception of the motives of the royalists, has greatly contributed to the derangement of our plans. We have never sufficiently distinguished between the slaves of absolute, and the friends of limited monarchy; between those who acted under the impulse of

base

base prejudice and despotism, and those who loved freedom with a monarch, but detested anarchy. There is no part of France more tranquil at this moment, than the fertile district of La Vendée; and the reason is apparent. The royalists took up arms for their religion, security and happiness, which had been invaded by a band of sacrilegious demagogues; they looked for assistance to those great military powers which affected to be in arms for the same cause, but they received none. This gave the republic a propitious opportunity of removing unfavorable prepossessions, and of reconciling them to obedience of its laws. The government held a Convention with the chiefs of the insurgents; it promised security of religion and forgiveness of the past. Those husbandmen, the most innocent class of human society, were undeceived in the intentions of the French, and consequently returned to their homes. The total pacification of La Vendée ensued; and two legions have been since formed for the defence of the country, from among those very men who were a little time before in arms against it. In this

instance, the French government conducted itself with consummate address, and singular moderation; and its example should be followed by every government, where the spirit of disaffection prevails. Ensure to men their rights, and they will obey with pleasure and gratitude, without troubling themselves to inquire whether they live under monarchial or republican constitutions. For, both kinds of government are appointed with a view to one end only, which is, the happiness of man. To be eternally recurring to measures of harshness and coercion, is to fan the flames of mutiny; to hold out invitations to confidence, by lenient and gentle methods, is the surest way to obtain it, even with usury. The whole art of government consists, not in mysteries of state, but in making the people happy. It will not be necessary to force men into a conviction of this principle when they believe that they are so. "I care not who rules," said Fletcher of Saltoun in the last century, "provided I am free." The French government perceived the danger of *dragooning* men into submission; and learnt by a dear-bought experience

experience that eternal lesson of civil wisdom, which prescribes to rulers the duty of reigning, over the affections, rather than over the fears of the people. By dissipating the apprehensions of the royal party, they conciliated the disaffected, and united France. Even the fate of Charette, has been more lamented in France, than in the rest of Europe. Though his country could not invest him with the honors of her Pantheon, she has nevertheless numbered him with the heroes and martyrs of antiquity, and dropt many a tear over his untimely fate. Posterity will rank his name with that of Sertorius, and strew his grave with flowers. The prostitute pen of history, would have lavished praises on his name, had his efforts been crowned with success; but defeated, he is exposed to execration, and unmerited obloquy.

To mix in treason, if the plot succeeds,
They're thrown neglected by; but if it fails,
They're sure to die like dogs.*

Cato. act. 3. sc. 6.

These

* This would probably have been the fate of Franklin, Washington,

These reasons sufficiently demonstrate that the confederates regarded the insurrection of the royalists, as a fortunate diversion,* from which they would derive great profit, by its drawing the attention of the French, to a distant quarter. This wretched and vagrant policy has been severely and justly censured by all the distinguished advocates of the cause of the French royalists; by Mr. Burke, M. de Calonne, and Mallet du Pan. It was the misfortune of the allies to have reposed too much confidence on the success of the confederacy, the cement and cohesion of which,

Washington, and Hancock, as it was of Russel and Sydney, and of all the patriotic insurgents of the world, whose fortunes were adverse. In fact, the legislative character of man is full of contradictions. Success too often determines the question of right.

* A pretty diversion it has been ! The war of La Vendée, has shed the blood of above 600,000 human beings, besides the consequent evils of want, suspension of industry, and neglect of agriculture. We have seen many such diversions in the course of the war, and among the rest, there is one which harrows up the soul of man. The Hamburg mail, brought us the intelligence of 100,000 men having been slaughtered in the passage of the Rhine and the storming of Kehl, *after the preliminaries of peace, were signed by the Austrian Ministers and the French General !!*

which, they considered as firm and unalterable. They wanted the sagacity to foresee, that there was a remarkable dissonance in all their justifying reasons and private motives, and that therefore the links of their union were not indissoluble. But temptation overcame the lessons of prudence, and they rashly embarked the safety of Europe on the casualties of events. They are justly reproached for neglecting to convince France, that their views were hostile not to her integrity and national independence, but to that internal system which was calculated to endanger and dissever both of them. The fortunate termination of the war depended entirely on this mode of conduct. Frenchmen should have been made sensible that the war was conducted against the principles of France, not against France herself. They should have been satisfied in the uprightness and sincerity of the confederates, before they could have been expected to be weaned from their prejudices. But the very opposite of all this, was preferred and adopted. By the most frontless insolence, by the most glaring acts of perfidy, by the most open

and

and unblushing ambition, the allies spread it through the Republic, that the war was against France, and not against the revolution. This fatal repugnance between their views and the only means of success, chastened the anarchy of France, into a spirit of order and unanimity, which brought on the failure of our enterprizes. The conflict was no longer dubious. Frenchmen contended on French ground, for French liberty, French laws, and French independence, against a combination of powers who were variously impelled by selfish motives, who avowed one principle and acted upon another, or in contradiction to the former, and whose minds were solely bent on the subjugation and dismemberment of France. The republic fought therefore on the vantage ground, from whence they possessed an evident superiority over the allies. It fought on principles alone (whether good or bad is not the subject of inquiry at this time) whereas, the allies were actuated by none. It had another advantage over them. As it was governed only by principles, it abided by them

them; it never wavered in its polity; it never changed its tone in the lowest vicissitudes of its fate. What it promised, it performed; what it planned, it executed; what it threatened, it punished. No shocks of adversity disturbed its resolute constancy, no depression of fortune, appalled its courage. On the contrary, amid disasters and peril, it displayed most magnanimity; and rose superior to the whinings of disappointment; when driven to the brink of ruin, it supported itself by the patient endurance of every sort of privation, moral and physical; and illustrated itself in the records of fame, by a prodigious display of all the virtues of heroism, prowess and public spirit. When forsaken by all the world, it appeared the greatest in it. This is not the fulsome language of panegyric, but the genuine voice of truth; and it has been introduced merely to contrast the conduct of the enemy, with that of the disheartened allies, who abandoned their pretensions in proportion to the strokes of adversity which they experienced, and whose spirits sunk deeper and deeper, under the pressure of mortification

and defeat. From this comparative estimate of the principles of the two parties, we can easily account for the ultimate success of the one, and the gradual despondency and defection of the other. If we are at all justified in reasoning from analogy, the inference will be self-evident, that the want of consistency in the course of the conduct of the war, is a demonstration of the want of principle in its commencement; while on the part of France, the uniformity of action is the strongest evidence of a fixt principle in the beginning. Far be it from me to offer arguments against the cause of the allies, from the bad fortune they have met with. He must be a shallow reasoner indeed, who would impute a want of principle to a want of success. These observations, on the contrary, are advanced, for the sake of shewing that the confederates did not pursue the *means* most proper to effectuate their *justifying reasons*, that we are in consequence authorized to surmise, if not to declare, that they were guided by motives different from what they avowed,

and

and which from their immoral tendency they were ashamed to avow; and lastly, that their pusillanimous and perfidious desertion of the royalists in La Vendée, proves that the exertions of those devoted beings, were regarded with the callous complacency, of an useful military diversion, in favor of the ambitious designs of the confederates. The reader must draw his own conclusion. But, if the facts which were proposed to be discussed, have been established; if i have shewn from the distracted state of France in 1793, that had the Vendeans been honorably supported, a considerable change would have been operated in the affairs of France; and if i have rightly accounted for their not having received that support; can any man hesitate to assent to the proposition, which i stated before, that "by this mean, the unprincipled conduct, and premeditated guilt of the allies, would be established by the most unequivocal evidence."*

There was not only a repugnance in the general conduct of the allies, but each separate power acted occasionally in contradiction to itself.† For immediately after the reduction of Condé, the prince of Saxe-Cobourg published a proclamation, in which, he proposed to the French, as the condition of peace, the constitution of 1789. But, before the people of France were allowed time enough to read it, its principles were revoked by the congress at Antwerp, which declared that Saxe-Cobourg had exceeded the limits of his authority. On this most unseasonable act of levity, it is almost impossible to expostulate without employing the severest terms of condemnation. It should be remembered that the congress was composed of the representatives

of

† It was before stated that the inconsistent conduct of the allies, proved the indecision of their principles. Another instance which was then omitted, will corroborate the truth of this assertion. The duke of York summoned the town of Dunkirk, not for Louis XVII, nor as at Valenciennes, for the Emperor and King, but for his Majesty the King of England. If this levity of conduct be contrasted with the disinterestedness of Lord Hood at Toulon, it will be found that we made ample compensation by our generosity in the South, for our predatory spirit in the North.

of all the combined powers, and that the duke of York was a member of it as the representative of our sovereign. He was therefore a party to this declaration, and we were thereby made accomplices in that violation of faith to the French people. The recal of the proclamation, was neither more nor less than a positive avowal on the part of the confederates, to impose a government on France. Thus we *practised* what the enemy had contemplated only *in idea*. For, it is well known that the decree of the 19th of November, 1792, the principle of which was said to plant the banner of revolt in every country of Europe, had not at that time been enforced, and the executive council of France had explained it away long before the reduction of Condé. But, have we so soon forgotten our interference in the affairs of Holland in the year 1786, when with the Prussians we effected the restoration of the Stadtholder in opposition to the wishes of the Dutch people? Or, if the opening of the Scheldt was deemed a practical illustration of that decree, what must we think of our conduct, when it was

done

done in the year 1785, by the Emperor himself? We manifested at that time not the least disposition to prevent its taking place. These contradictions can be no otherwise reconciled than by the supposition, which the hard lot of extinguished Poland justifies, that the generous interference of free states to dispense the blessings which they enjoy, excites the interference of crowned heads; while the rapacious ambition of despots may seize the dominions of a defenceless neighbor, and commit with impunity, an act of injustice, which shall be secretly connived at, if not openly supported by every court in Europe.

But as if those transactions were not sufficiently detestable in themselves, as if the measure of human afflictions were not already filled to the brim; another calamity was added to the list of those evils which have scourged mankind, and which by its principle and pernicious influence, was destined to cast a shade on every future effort of patriotism and independence. By the extinction of Poland, the allies diminished that awful respect

respect which was heretofore entertained for the public safety of Europe, and for that great law of nations which has preserved its equipoise for several ages, and saved it from tumbling into the horrors of extensive conquest. What was done in Poland, would have been done in France, if the vigor and power of the French people, had not opposed to it an insurmountable barrier. All the savagery of popular licentiousness, all the wild freaks of anarchy, all the blood-stain'd scenes of tumultuous and unbridled multitudes, vanish before the dreadful idea of gathering the whole civilized world under the yoke of military despotism. The guilt of the destructive tyrants and oppressors of nations, is to be measured less by the examples which they afford, than by the extent of mischief which they occasion. The world contemplates their cruelties and desolations, as a thunder storm, temporary and ephemeral, which while they excite astonishment, leave behind nevertheless, a ray of hope to irradiate the dark gloom of terror that every where prevails. But, the example of confirmed despotism produces a lengthened

lengthened sorrow, wounds our sensibility in the tenderest point, defeats and blights every generous expectation, embrutes and vilifies the human mind, and consigns it to an obscuration, at once vexatious and cruel. In their partition of Poland, a precedent is established in favor of tyranny, which is capable of justifying the boldest violation of the laws of nature. Every independent nation must perceive, that it is the want of power only that prevents the circulation of this oppressive policy. It is a precedent that strikes at the root of all morality, and at the safety and independence of nations. It swallows up in the gulph of ambition the public law of Europe, under the venerable safeguard of which, its nations had preserved a studied and honorable integrity. All national effort, all national competition, all national freedom, is by this principle exiled from the cabinets of princes, and sentenced to eternal absence. The policy of nations would drivel into abject servitude, and men would look for remedy to moral ills, through a long, dark and dreary vista of wretchedness and despair. It has laid the foundations

foundations of a principle as extensive in its mischievous operations, as cruel and unjust in its original; a principle which ought to be resisted with firmness by every independent government. For whatever nation passively submits to it, participates in the subversion of the political order of Europe, and becomes thereby an accomplice in the crime of despotism. Englishmen have long been remarked for their humanity, nobleness of spirit, and generous munificence, but above all for their spirit of liberty. This spirit pervades our laws, and is the essence of our constitution. It renders the lustre of the sovereign more resplendent, and ennobles the inferiority of the peasant. It is the animating principle of our commerce, fleets and armies, and it has illuminated with a ray of glory the name of Englishman in every quarter of the globe. Is it possible that with such a character to preserve, with such a glorious reputation to uphold, and with such a constitution to cherish, we should tamely view the spoil of Poland, and the cruel abridgment of the liberty of others? We can-

not consent to so great a disinherison of a large portion of the fellowship of civilized man, without forfeiting that high reputation, which has cost so many ages to rear up and to establish. It would be admitting the truth of those philosophical reproaches, which have been occasionally cast upon us, that the miseries and sufferings of man which are remote from our scene of action touch not our hearts. It would indeed be acknowledging that we are impervious to the feelings of humanity, and that we are heedless of that sublime spirit of freedom, which has ever lifted us to prosperity and to glory. When it pleased the Supreme Disposer of events, to visit Lisbon with one of those tremendous shocks of nature which carry ruin and affliction on all sides, our benevolence towards the unhappy sufferers, was nobly sympathetic, prompt, and active. Let it not be said that we have declined in this temper, but rather let every example of past generosity, render us more emulous to approve ourselves worthy, not only of our ancient repute, but of the admiration and imitation of all posterity.

It

It has been now sufficiently proved, that we have deserted those obligations, which the necessity of the war imposed upon us; and that in the dereliction of the cause of the royalists, and in the passive connivance at the extinction of Poland, shame, disgrace, and defeat have accompanied the conduct of the allies. I have not examined the question that has been so much agitated, on the justice and necessity of the war, because it is now too late to repair the mischiefs which have attended it. My object is, (even admitting its original propriety) to mark out the continued deviations of the allies, from their first principle, and thence to shew that success could not rationally be expected from a course so extremely impolitic. Too much hesitation, too much reflection could not have been misemployed concerning it; for after it had been once begun, it must have been obvious to every dispassionate observer, that it involved us in an alternative truly distressing. For if France had been subdued, the independence of nations would have been annihilated; if she proved victorious, the safety

of every government in Europe would be endangered. Entertaining no doubt of the truth of this latter proposition, it naturally recurs to us that if we had followed the maxim of Augustus, “never to fish with a golden hook”* that is, never to engage in an enterprize that was likely to be more expensive than profitable, we should not have had cause to dread the latter alternative.

If we turn our eyes from the continent, and look at home, we shall every where perceive the ravages occasioned by a destructive foreign war. An enormous and accumulating national debt, a grinding system of taxation, pressing down the middle and inferior classes of society, exhaust their labors and swallow up the comforts of life. A system of venality, branching out from the capital, and extending its ramifications to the remotest parts of the country, gives the sober and loyal subject, every reason to dread its direful effects, in the absence of all public spirit, and in the relaxation of those energies, which are conducive

* Sueton. vit. August. c. 25.

ducive to morals, tranquillity and public safety. This system appears to have become so deeply rooted and incorporated in the existence of all orders, that men of the most amiable and virtuous characters in private life, not only drink of its poisonous qualities, but even openly countenance and defend it, as essential to the maintenance of our government. In the course of this war, complaints have resounded from every quarter, and sometimes distant murmurs have been heard. Sometimes they were couched in the language of petition, sometimes in the strong tone of remonstrance. The latter have occasionally given offence, on account of the angry temper in which they were conceived, and the harsh terms in which they were written. They were supposed to breathe the language of insult, and to denote symptoms of disaffection, and therefore coercive measures were considered as most proper to effectuate a radical cure of the evil genius which had produced them. State prosecutions commenced. The prisons of England, which for a century past, had been the receptacle principally of felons, and

the

the outcasts of society, became the forlorn habitations of men, convicted of publishing illegal opinions. The scheme of coercion did not abate in proportion to the abated zeal of the opponents of government, nor to the cessation of the savage anarchy of France. A considerable degree of just terror was excited here by the unparalleled vices and crimes of the French revolutionists. That every constitutional effort should have been employed to avert similar occurrences at home, no thinking man will deny. But, whether in the pursuit of so desirable an end, we have not occasionally overstepped the strict bounds of law and the Constitution, will be determined some years hence, when the passions of men shall be allayed, and they shall be more prone to calm and pacific investigation. Perhaps, it may then be discovered, that we have not distinguished with sufficient nicety, between the opponents of government, and the enemies of the Constitution; between those who sincerely loved their country, but deprecated the measures of administration; and detested the war, without being at the same time

time, the partizans of any faction whatever. At all events, it must be granted, that the men who have suffered beneath the lash of the law, have been often the most ingenuous, tho' indeed the boldest adversaries. While *they* linger out their days in mournful obscurity, amid the noxious damps of prisons, or slide into the jaws of death on the bleak shores of New Holland; the real traitor who fostered in secret the elements of discord, and slyly concentrated the materials of civil disturbance, escapes the vigilance of the laws, and stalks abroad as a loyal citizen, under favor of his own hypocrisy, and by his superior skill in the arts of treachery and simulation. These remarks are not offered, as extenuations of the improper conduct of those who have suffered, or who actually suffer for the publication of their sentiments; neither are they intended to insinuate, that any case of the kind, has actually happened. They are only conclusions deduced from the general history of man, and from the discovery and termination of all seditious confederacies. Their tendency is to prove that it is not *the forlorn hope,*

who

who are always the real culprits, nor those who are foremost to act and to suffer, the chief abettors of mischief. It is a fortunate circumstance for governments, that they can find victims from among the foremost, tho' the most open of their enemies; it is an unfortunate circumstance for the latter, that the fingers of the law, are not sufficiently long to reach the subtle contriver who acts from the back ground, and who moves and pushes on the puppets from behind the curtain. If the timid but eloquent consul of Rome, had possessed the courage to probe deeper into the secrets of the Catilianian conspiracy, and to follow boldly his best judgment in the service of his country, he would perhaps, have more than merited the appellation of "*Father of his country.*" It is not improbable but that he would have proclaimed from the *forum*, that Cæsar "*did live,*" and would have saved the Roman Commonwealth, from being subverted by the most artful, and the most accomplished conspirator of the world.

In taking a retrospective view of the situation
of

of our country for several years past, it is impossible not to affirm that there has existed among all parties, a kind of sectarian spirit, which has preyed like a vulture on our entrails, and broken the links of mutual confidence. The revolution of France, was the Shibboleth of every party, and afforded to each, the arguments by which it was to convince, or to confound its antagonists. In the quarrels of factions, one party totally laid aside all reasonings from the constitution established by our fathers, while another, intimidated by the examples of France, were inadvertently pursuing plans for the support of that Constitution, the tendency of which went to sap the foundations of public liberty, and to vindicate every strong measure, under the dangerous plea of state necessity. Thus, the fear of one party, and the violence of another, contributed to convulse the state, and to endanger the Constitution itself. To extirpate the hydra of democracy, another monster was raised, and that was, the hydra of power, fed, nourished, and supported by

coercion. Strong measures on the part of government, necessarily produced violent opposition on the part of the people. The action of the latter, occasioned fresh vigor from the former, till at length, the Habeas Corpus act was suspended, and a number of persons were imprisoned on charges of High Treason. After their acquittal, the disunion continued to such a degree, that we were thought by some persons to be almost in a state of civil war. Things remained in this discordant position for a few months, when a base, cowardly, and miscreant attack on the person of his Majesty, while going to exercise the highest functions of his government, produced another strong act of power. If the bill which has been enacted for the safety of the sovereign answer its end, every good subject will have reason to rejoice. But the safety of the King, and the public meetings of the people are two distinct things, tho' far from being in opposition to each other. The more a virtuous and mild sovereign is seen among his people, the more he will be beloved;

and

and the greater the multitudes that surround him, the more will be the blessings that are poured on his head, and the prayers that are offered up to heaven for his preservation. In the despotic regions of the east, where silence and gloomy terror reign, it is politic to shut up the sovereign in the recesses of the Seraglio, and to guard his person, with massive walls, and with a large body of eunuchs and of janissaries. Tyrants are always cowards; they ought therefore to be environed with armed slaves. But, a King of England, should be surrounded only by his own virtues; and in this light, we may challenge the history of our country, to produce an instance of a monarch possessed of more exemplary virtues in private life, and of more disinterested ambition to make his people happy, than the king who now sits upon the throne. And well it may be so; for the family which now fills our throne, have ever esteemed it their highest glory, to bear the honorable title of being the lords of freemen, and the assertors of the liberties of mankind.

On the subject of the Convention bill, there will be a greater difference of opinion. If it arose from the general practice of the constitution, no one would give it a more decided approbation than myself. But, as it is acknowledged to be a departure from its general nature, I can only lament the cause which gave it birth. I have had too much experience of the noise, folly, passions, and tumult of large bodies, not to know that they are most contemptible modes of informing mankind. They are dangerous weapons in the hands of a demagogue, and useless ones, in the hands of a real patriot. A multitude can never think, much less act with prudence, temper, and a regard to justice. An army of soldiers is a multitude, but organized into separate and compact divisions, and subject to discipline and command; whereas, a multitude of politicians, can neither be disciplined nor commanded. They may be inflamed to mischief, but can never be inducted to order and regularity. All their measures are formed with precipitation and without previous deliberation;

beration; their decisions are swayed by passion and by the impulse of the moment, not regulated by serious consideration and sober reason. Every subject that is agitated, in these times, is always prepared beforehand by a few persons, and the determination of the people is loudly demanded by those popular speakers, who previously gain their assent from the influence of their eloquence. From the period of the assembled multitude at Athens, to the popular meetings which we have witnessed in England, there is not a single exception to this observation. It is founded on the character and general disposition of men, the greater part of whom are little disposed to reason for themselves.† The people

most easily imposed upon will quickly be led to do what they can

† He that reflects upon the actions and discourses of mankind, will find their defects in this kind very frequent, and very observable. 1. The first is of those who seldom reason at all, but do and think according to the example of others, whether parents, neighbors, ministers, or who else they are pleased to make choice of to have an implicit faith in, for saving of themselves the pains and trouble of thinking and examining for themselves. 2. The second is of those who put passion in the place of reason, and being resolved that shall govern their actions and arguments, neither use their own, nor hearken to other people's reason, any farther than it suits their

ean never move but in wide and destructive inundations. If every man in a multitude were as wise and sedate as Locke or Bacon, the mass might act with folly or violence, because low and violent passions only can be instantly diffused or agitate large assemblies. The principle therefore which should resolve unwieldy multitudes, into small bodies capable of reflection and judgment, and subject them, like matter, to arrangement, would be one of the most sage and beneficial of human institutions. But the advantage of such a policy, would be infinitely more acceptable, if it emanated from the order of things in society, from the sense of its propriety among the people, from the conviction of its salutary effects on the tranquillity of communities, from its conformity with the spirit of the constitution; than if it sprang from the mandates of government.

to maintain good order among the people

amour, interest, or party; and these one may observe commonly content themselves with words which have no distinct ideas to them, though, in other matters, that they come with an unbiassed indifference to, they want not abilities to talk and hear reason, where they have no secret inclination that hinders them from being untractable to it.

Locke on the Conduct of the Understanding, §. 3.

ment; was enforced by penal sanctions, and was issued from one side as the emblem of fear, and received by the other, as the monument of suspicion. Indeed, the best and wisest regulations of civil wisdom, in this, as well as in most other countries, have originated without any formal compact, in the sense of their utility. The revolutions of time, necessarily ripen them into stability; and under the general name of Customs, they operate in concert with the written law, and contribute with them to raise up that great civil code, which fixes the allotment, and determines the distinctions of man in society. The most universally received and approved laws of England, are not to be found in the Statute Book; they are, on the contrary, engravened in the heart of every Englishman, as his birth-right; and give him that dignified pride and political consequence, which justly make him envied by the better part of the surrounding nations, and dreaded by the slaves of arbitrary power. It would therefore, have been a more fortunate and an happier event, if this rule of policy, had sprung up

up naturally from the ameliorated condition, and improved judgment of the people. But, as it stands on our Statute roll, a monumental record of the moody, malcontent spirit of the times, it remains for those who complain of its harshness, to obey without reluctance, and to fulfil with chearfulness every obligation, which the laws of their country may require from them.*

There is not a question in the whole science of politics, which has been more fiercely debated than that, which regards an unqualified liberty of the Press. To determine in the present state of society, whether men are entitled to, or may

* It is a singular fact, that a very few weeks after the bill for suppressing tumultuous meetings had been enacted by the British legislature, a similar law, copied almost *verbatim*, but attended with greater denunciations of punishment, was actually proposed by Doulcet in the Council of five hundred, and passed into a law. Although the object of those laws, was to crush the designs of the seditious, yet, it cannot be concealed, that they may be turned by the wily conspirator in a contrary direction, and they may be artfully employed to propagate the most seditious measures. For, as conspiracies are always carried on in secrecy, it is obvious the less the number in each division of men, the more difficult will be the discovery; whereas, large public meetings, soon disclose their intentions.

be indulged with the privilege of publishing any sentiments however mischievous in their extent, would be to determine a point of the greatest importance to the progress or depression of the human mind, and to the peace and safety of communities. There never was a moment when the solution of a political problem, could be more beneficial or pernicious in its consequences; for men in this age are not destined to act within narrow bounds; the sphere of their virtues or their vices is large and extensive, in exact proportion to the fermented state in which the whole civilized world is thrown. Yet, with the most ardent wishes for the peace and happiness of mankind, with the sincerest desire of seeing my own country enjoy the sweets of a constitution the most excellent, and repose under laws the most luminous and free in their spirit, and the most benignant in their operations, that ever nation was blessed with, in the annals of human kind; with the most severe meditations, and the most attentive reading of those authors who have discussed the subject, that my under-

standing would permit, and with a careful examination of the evils which may follow the unbridled delivery of opinion; i must declare according to conscientious conviction, that every punishment of opinions, however erroneous in themselves, appears to me to be highly injurious to the domestic felicity, to the general improvement, and intellectual progress of every nation. Hence, i must reprobate every law of coercion that is applied to this purpose; and altho' i am led to censure measures which bear the stamp of power, where (according to my habit of thinking) power ought not to be employed; yet, i am at all times open to conviction, and offer my sentiments with that diffidence of their justice, which every man must feel, who undertakes to discuss a controversial argument, especially one, that has not yet been decided by those, whose knowledge and talents are superior, and whose experience is greater than mine. §

We now proceed to the next ground of inquiry, viz.

2. What

§ See the Appendix.

2. What are we doing ?

Towns were taken, Ships of war submerged in the ocean, whole regiments perished victims to a pestilential and desolating climate, the channels of commerce were greatly obstructed, the enemy every where drove before them, the veteran armies of Europe, and described a career of victory unrivalled in the galaxy of conquest; these events being familiar were regarded with indifference and unconcern; but when public credit devolved, when the bank had suspended its payments from the shameful panic of invasion, when our fleets were in a state of mutiny; we then, and then only, became astounded and appalled, and desponded of the public safety. We considered the quick succession of our defeats on the continent, as mere contingencies of war, and while the common cause was making shipwreck abroad, we sang lullaby at home. When pressed to negotiate, administration always answered, "with whom can we treat?" as if those, who conducted a great empire to war and glory were

not competent also to conclude a treaty of peace; as if there was a peculiar charm requisite to the signature of a treaty; as if the defeating of the best armies of the world, did not give a sufficient qualification to sign a treaty of peace; and as if it were a more arduous task to be skilled in the tactics of diplomacy, than to wield the forces of a powerful nation with judgment and success. As long as there was a glimpse of hope, we scorned every idea of pacification; as long as there was a straw to catch at, we continued to fight and to bluster. So that we may think ourselves peculiarly fortunate in the end, if we be not obliged to put Grotius, Puffendorff, and Vattel on the shelf; and receive with humility the lessons of negociation, which the modern French diplomatists, have by our own headstrong folly been preparing for us.

With whom can we treat? If we admit the propriety of this question before the installation of the Directory, the same argument or rather quibble, will not avail us after that event took

place

place. The executions on the plain of Grenelle, and the sitting of the High Court of Justice at Vendome, were, I should imagine, pretty strong evidences of an established government. If pomp, pageantry, body guards, and tinsel trappings, be emblems of an established government, we might have discovered it long since in the robes and plumage of the council of elders, and the council of youngsters, the ministers of war, justice, foreign affairs, &c. &c. All the variety of coloring that the inventive mind of the most accomplished Harlequin could devise, was then fully displayed in France, and the political pantomime, descended from the highest to the lowest subaltern of government.* If power be an evidence of established government, we might have found it unceasingly manifested throughout the history of the revolution. All the regular governments of Europe have long since made this wonderful

* Guarded by 120 horse and 120 foot, and preceded by trumpets and drums, like the march of Flockton to Bartholemew fair, the Directory rival in splendor and puppet shew, the most absolute princes of Europe.

derful discovery. An established government depends less on the evidence of time, than on the general assent of its people. It must be acknowledged, that the length of its duration, is, in a great measure, an evidence of that assent; but it is enough, for all the purposes of negociation, that laws are enacted, that there is a power which enforces their execution, and a people who obey. Within the short period of one hundred and fifty years, the history of England presents several instances of the kind. The monarchy of France, with Mazarin as its prime minister, and the different powers of Europe, sent ambassadors to the government which had depōsed and beheaded Charles I. On the sudden restoration of the kingly government, the same line of conduct was observed. At the æra of the Revolution, tho' the empire was greatly divided, and Scotland and Ireland were in open rebellion, ambassadors were sent to recognize king William III. and to preserve with him the relations of amity and peace. The cabinet of Great Britain does not scruple to form treaties

with

with American Republicans, who were in our times stigmatised as rebels. Nor did we hesitate to support a German adventurer, who had been invested with the sovereignty of Corsica, at a time too, when that brave but turbulent people, asserted their freedom, and revolted from the dominion of the Genoese, under which they had remained for many centuries. The son of a petty innkeeper and a washerwoman, had raised himself by his talents and his intrigues to the supreme authority in Rome; and tho' he did not live long to enjoy the possession of his usurped authority; yet, while he exercised the functions of executive magistracy, the princes of Italy, and of those parts beyond the Alps, who were interested in the affairs of that country, treated with this Majesty of the day, as with an hereditary sovereign prince. § But, when the storm of the revolution had spent itself, when the dance of Death had ceased, and France began to repair the gigantic

§ See the life of Niccolo Gabrini di Rienzi, by P. Brumoi, and Cerceau, or the short but eloquent narrative of Mr. Gibbon in his history of the Decline and Fall of the Roman empire. v. 6. p. 572 &c. 4to edit.

gantic evils which the cruel reign of anarchy had entailed upon it; when it adopted a constitution of government not very remote from our own, we made no serious endeavours to obtain a solid and durable accommodation of our disputes. Our tone of superiority led to irritation, not to peace. In private life, when two families which have long been at variance, are about to close their mutual strifes, it would be the height of folly and indecency in either, to provoke afresh former antipathies by virulent and overbearing language. On the contrary, it would be the duty of both, to bear with temper each others foibles, and to give way mutually. The analogy is applicable to the broils of nations. Calamity has a wonderful effect in softening the soul into a spirit of forgiveness. Instead of repeating the many occasions of our jealousies and disquiet, it would have been far more honorable, more just, and more manly, to have been the first to stretch out the right hand of fellowship, and to contribute as much as laid in our power, to heal the wounds of the two greatest families of the earth. We could

could not have chosen a more propitious opportunity of fulfilling this great moral duty, than immediately after the organization of the present government, when Boissy D'Anglas, in the name of the ruling power characterised us as a brave and loyal people, and held out the strongest invitations to the return of peace. But we chose to act as if the return of order in France, were an object of envy to Britain, and as if our national prosperity depended on the exclusive inheritance of a free government. The nearer the French came towards us, in the spirit of imitation, the further it seemed, we wished to remove ourselves from them. This policy was unworthy of the lofty spirit of a free people. A Grecian philosopher who had been cast away on an unknown coast, comforted his shipwrecked companions, with the idea that they were thrown upon a civilized country, because he had found a problem of Euclid, drawn upon the sand. But we found no cause of exultation in the discovery of a law of Alfred, on a foreign shore, nor any hopes of peace to our wearied natures,

o

but

but in the extinction of every principle of rational emulation and competition.

When, at length, all qualms of conscience, all ridiculous punctilio, and formal quiddities were removed by the splendid and rapid victories of the French, we dispatched a minister to France, seemingly, to take a peep at the Directory; who soon discovering the object of his trip, dispatched him back again. Many objections were then started against the scheme of negociation. It was said, that less was to be feared from the successes of the French, than from their subversive system in the time of peace. And we disdained not to listen to the cavils of determined enmity. Had we at that time, proposed conditions of peace with sincerity, we should not have beheld the modern Poliorcetes, popularising himself in Italy, and (to use a French expression) *revolutionizing* that delightful portion of Europe. The cases of the king of Sardinia and of the Pope, were cited as examples of this subversive system. It seems, we reprobated violently

what

what republican France performed in the raptures of victory; but willingly passed over what was dictated by France under a monarchy. The eighth article of the treaty with Sardinia which stipulated a general amnesty, was only a repetition of what had been done at the treaty of the Pyrenees, when Don Lewis de Haro, who had to deal with the wary Mazarin, interfered in a similar manner, in behalf of the prince of Condé, and his rebellious partizans. And the twentieth article, which provides for the disavowal of the proceedings employed towards the last ambassador of France, is warranted by a remarkable precedent in the history of the house of Savoy. Charles Emmanuel, ally of Henry IV. was obliged to *ask pardon* of Philip III. of Spain, for having entered into a treaty with the French King, and was compelled to send his son, the prince of Piedmont, to Madrid, in order to supplicate and implore the mercy of the Spanish Court, and to *humble himself in his father's name*. All this was done by one of the ablest princes that ever filled a throne, who, wa-

ged war, not with the tactics of disciplined armies, but according to the lively and elegant expression of Baptista Nani, by carrying on "*a war of wit,*" upon his enemies. History furnishes us with documents equally substantial in respect to the armistice with the Pope. By the second article, it is settled that he "shall send with all possible expedition to Paris, a plenipotentiary in order to obtain from the Executive Directory a definitive peace, by offering the necessary reparations for the outrage and insults which the French endured in his states; *particularly for the murder of Basseville*, and the recompence due to his family." In the conduct of the Court of Rome, towards France, there was a more palpable violation of the laws of nations; and when we consider the terms of the armistice, and compare them with the conduct of monarchial France, we shall be surprized at their moderation. For, in the time of Louis XIV. Cardinal Chigi, nephew to Pope Alexander VII. was sent in character of *legate a latere*, (the first, says M. Voltaire, who ever went from the Papal Court to ask pardon)

don) to give satisfaction to the King for the outrage offered to his ambassador the Duke de Crequi, and for the murder of one of his pages, altho' it was notorious that the insolence and debauchery of the ambassador's suite, were the causes of the insults he received. In vain did Alexander remonstrate, and endeavour to rouze the Catholic princes in his favor. The parliament of Provence, irritated at his conduct, summoned him to appear, and sequestered his country of Avignon. At any other time, says the elegant writer before mentioned, such an insult upon the papal dignity would have been followed by a peal of excommunications from the Vatican, but those arms were now become equally useless and ridiculous. The Pope was obliged to comply, and to banish from Rome his own brother Don Mario Chigi, to break the Corsican guard which had contributed to the tumult, and to erect a pillar in the city of Rome, with an inscription expressing the injury and reparation. Yet this was not all. The king did not content himself with accepting those temporary ceremonies; in return for an injury offered;

ferred; but he obliged the Court of Rome to restore Castro and Ronciglione to the Duke of Parma, to indemnify the Duke of Modena for his claims on Commachio. All these submissions were exacted by crowned heads, and even the greater part of them by that ancient monarchy of France, which some of our countrymen wished to see revived, and without which they were of opinion, that the peace of Europe, and the civil order of society could not be secured. It was even asserted that the conduct of the French in Italy, was only a specimen of what they would do with this country, if we consented to treat with them. We were told from the House of Lords, that the liberation of all those imprisoned for the publication of their opinions, was to be inevitably a condition of the treaty, and even my name was brought forward (as a scarecrow, I suppose) to fill up a chasm in the mystical and prophetic speech that was then delivered.* One would have imagined that

* See the debates of the House of Lords on the 7th October, 1796.

that the opponent of peace, would have relied on weightier arguments ; and not have suffered every little, pitiful subject, to be crammed into his mind and to encrease upon it, like Sir John Falstaff's two men in buckram suits, who became eleven before the end of the story. Whatever opinion the noble lord, may entertain of my "*enflaming doctrines*" as he has thought proper to name my former political sentiments, or however he may have delighted to exercise his eloquence, in attempting to wound an individual, who could not at that time, defend himself, i feel no hesitation in avowing, that i have too much of the pride of an old Englishman about me, to have profited by such humiliation. And rather than take the benefit of an article of a treaty which would have bespoken the subjugation of my country, i would have preferred imprisonment for life, or death itself.

I shall only make another reflection on this subject. The emancipation of the Negroes was considered also as a bar to peace; and to the pernicious

pernicious and disorganizing system of the French, we were desired to attribute the ruin of their colonies, and our loss of St. Vincent and Grenada. Facts however, on which alone, we ought to found our reasonings, speak the contrary. But, the misfortune, is, that when Englishmen cross the line, they appear to forget the civil happiness and moral order of society at home, and are so soured over head and ears in the vast sea of traffic and opulence, that they become "the most case-hardened of the Ironsides." When will this abominable trade in human blood, this reproach of human nature, this blot on the religion we profess be abolished? If the reasonings of freedom and philosophy will not avail, let a glaring fact plead the cause of the unhappy African. This disorganizing and pernicious system (the emancipation of the Negroes) which had been represented to be so baneful as to blast even the fruits of the earth, and to annihilate the once flourishing colony of St. Domingo, was productive of events peculiarly interesting to the advocates of the abolition. For, when that part of

the

the French colony, which had long been compelled to adopt the proclamation of Santhonax and Polverell, in which the Negroes were declared free, and entitled to one third of the value of the estates upon which they had worked as slaves, fell into the hands of the English, it was declared to surpass in cultivation and in fruitfulness the richest of our own islands. In the extraordinary gazette published on Thursday July 17th 1794, there was a letter from Brigadier General Whyte, in which the reader will find the following impressive sentence; "The importance of this conquest to Great Britain, you, Sir, must know; *there is more sugar now nearly ready to cut, than in all Jamaica.*" I leave the reader to make his own comment.†

After having tried the effects of another cam-
P paign

† Under this second head, more might have been said, but, it was not my design to enter into every subject which may have occurred, or is actually taking place in this country, as it would fill more than one volume. But to point out, only such prominent parts of our conduct, as have a material effect on the safety of the state. In this sense, it will be noticed,

paign, and experimented the same disastrous routine of defeat, we seem to be, at length seriously convinced of the absolute necessity of peace. An ambassador is found to acknowledge Brabant as an integral part of the Republic; and what is equally extraordinary, he is the very same eminent character, who declared a few months ago to the French minister, M. De la Croix, that the king of Great Britain would not hear of any terms of negociation, unless it was admitted as the basis, that the Netherlands should be restored to the Emperor! It has been said, that we were not sincere in our late attempt at negociation, and it has been considered as a political juggle for the purpose of raising money. This was perhaps, carrying the spirit of opposition too far. We might have been sincere in our wishes for peace, but we certainly were wretchedly agreed

noticed, that i have made no mention of the principles of the pending negociation, as we are at present, entirely in the dark respecting it. For a very different reason, i have avoided any observations on the state of the fleet. Indeed as the events that are actually passing, are instantaneous, they require less of our attention in a pamphlet of this kind, than those which are past.

agreed on the means of obtaining it. If the present legation, be really and sincerely authorized to effectuate this long expected event, let it nevertheless, be provident of its concessions, and vigilant over the public welfare. Neither the integrity, the future stability, the character of the nation, ought to be compromised for the name of peace; as such deleterious policy, would present the name only, not the reality. Peace, even at this time, is not to be desired at all events. Let us have peace, but let it bring blessings with it, not the fetters of subjugation. Let it not be calculated to make our peace establishment, more odious and more distressing than war itself; but let it be consistent with the tranquillity, the dignity, the majesty of the British empire. Those among us who have censured the original of this war, will not nevertheless be found disposed to consent to the tame surrender of the national honor. If reforms be desired, they will not be sought after, either through the medium of foreign conquest, or of civil commotion. That liberty is not worth the acquisition, which is re-

ceived as a boon from military conquerors, or purchased by the inglorious aid of peculating friends. There have been nations in the history of the world, whose hard lot it has been, to wish success to the public enemy, rather than be encumbered at home with the load of civil oppression; but their cases were dissimilar from our own. We are already in possession of a great social compact, the reversion of which is in our posterity, to whom we are bound to transmit it unadulterated, and, if possible, improved. The people of England, will not receive any advantages from the hands of an enemy, much less, bow under their menaces. In the revolution of Italy, i sincerely rejoice, because Italy wanted it; but i cannot avoid lamenting that stupid effeminacy, which made them receive their recovered liberties from the dictates of a Conqueror, and pay the purchase, with their best treasures. All that is necessary for the government of England is, to unite the people; and that unanimity can be no otherwise effected, than by convincing them, that administration have abandoned

bandoned their original designs, and contend now for independence alone. If it should be apparent, that France withdraws herself from every fair proposition, if she should hold a domineering and magisterial tone, and proffer conditions which cannot be assented to, without renouncing the high privileges of our country; there will not be found, i conceive, among the whole body of opponents of administration, a solitary individual, who will not join to resist such flagitious, usurping, and desperate ambition.

There remains but one subject more to consider, and then i shall close my observations on this article; it relates to the cowardly, and traitorous attempts that have been made, and which are said to be still making, to seduce the soldiery from their duty and allegiance. The man who openly derides all our civil institutions, who laughs at and ridicules all social conventions, who blasphemes the religion of love and peace; is nothing in comparison to the miscreant who counsels treason, and insinuates treachery in secret. If

it

it be my opinion, that reformatory measures are indispensable, that laws are prescriptive, that tyranny uplifts its head, and i publish my opinions; i may act illegally, but the publicity of them, is a demonstration of the conviction on which i speak. If i openly attack our constitutional policy, i do it in defiance of law; i risk my personal safety, and stake my domestic enjoyments on the general reception of my principles; i write or speak against laws which i am well convinced can punish me for what i do. This mode of conduct is open, manly, and generous; because notice is given of the meditated blow, and the antagonist has time to prepare, and put himself in a posture of defence. But the low-minded, and cowardly assassin, who lurks unseen, in the lanes and alleys of darkness, to stab with his stiletto, is a monster that ought to be vomited from human society. Such a character is capable of perpetrating any crime however abominable; he is literally worse than the slanderer, who is without doubt, the greatest criminal in the world; greater even than the murderer.

derer himself.* And what a moment has been chosen to forward their guilty machinations ! when we are engaged in war with a most powerful

* "Vice hath not, i believe, a more abject slave ; society produces not a more odious vermin ; nor can the devil receive a guest more worthy of him, than a flanderer. The world, i am afraid, regards not this MONSTER with half the abhorrence which he deserves ; and i am more afraid to assign the reason of this criminal lenity shewn towards him ; yet it is certain, that the thief looks innocent in the comparison ; nay, the murderer himself can seldom stand in competition with his guilt : for slander is a more cruel weapon than a sword, as the wounds which the former gives are always incurable. One method, indeed, there is of killing, and that the basest and most execrable of all, which bears an exact analogy to the vice here disclaimed against, and that is *poison*. A means of revenge so base, and yet so horrible, that it was once wisely distinguished by our laws from all other murders, in the peculiar severity of the punishment.

" Besides the dreadful mischiefs done by slander, and the baseness of the means by which they are effected, there are other circumstances that highly *aggravate its atrocious quality* ; for it often proceeds from *no provocation*, and seldom promises itself any reward, unless, *some black and infernal mind may propose a reward in the thought of having procured the ruin and misery of another.*

TOM JONES, b. II. c. I.

" Shakspere hath nobly touched this vice, when he says,
 " Who steals my purse, steals trash ; 'tis something, nothing ;
 'Twas mine, 'tis his ; and hath been slave to thousands :
 But he that filches from me my good name,
 Robs me of that WHICH NOT ENRICHES HIM,
 AND MAKES ME POOR INDEED."

erful and artful enemy; when we are endeavoring to restore the blessings of peace, which, it is well known are best obtained by the sense which the enemy entertain of the resources, vigor, and unanimity of our country. Beside, to encourage men to betray their allegiance at home, is to open the door to their betraying it abroad. It is doing the greatest injury to society. It is treason against a whole people, because while the nation sleeps in security and confidence in the watchfulness of its government, the pillars of the state are removed, and the torch is thrown into the midst of the social pile. Happily however for the honor of the military and the ~~repose~~ of the state, the attempts of the malignant have been fruitless. May our brave defenders preserve their integrity unspotted, and remember the words of one of our greatest lawyers,* that in this kingdom, *no man should take up arms, but with a view to defend his country, and its laws: he puts not off the citizen when he enters the camp; but it is because he is a citizen, and would wish to continue so, that he makes*

* Blackstone. v. 1, p. 395. 4to. edit.

makes himself for a while a soldier.

We are now to attend to the chief object of this pamphlet. But before we enter upon it, it may not be amiss to point out in a few words the benefits that may be derived from the foregoing sheets; which will be a sufficient justification of the considerable portion of our notice, which the two previous questions (and particularly the first) have occupied. Nothing will afterwards remain, but to state my propositions in as concise a manner as possible; since the reasonings that may arise on the different means proposed, must be left to the exercise of the public judgment. In every retrospect of past conduct, whether made by individuals or nations, if there be manifested a disposition to inquire dispassionately, and to amend the wrongs which they may have committed, there will be a moral certainty, that their future path in life, will be regular and safe. For the most efficacious mode of correcting errors, is, to examine them. If in such examination, we

find that our designs have been improper, we ought immediately to abandon them; or, if we continue to think that our designs were just, but that the means which we employed to fulfil them, were ill chosen, we ought to change our measures, but still to persevere in our original plans; because an honest intention may be frustrated from a variety of unforeseen causes, and success it is well known, does not always attach itself to the right cause. And lastly, if our justifying reasons and motives, as well as our means of fulfilling them, be deemed unjust, we ought to recur to different measures of policy, and retrace our steps, and if possible recover the position, which we have lost by our folly. One or the other of these cases, must result from sober inquiry, and therefore the necessity of contemplating with so much attention the past, and the present, is fully proved. We now therefore proceed to the last ground of inquiry, which i have always had in sight, and occasionally referred to in the preceding observations, and which will be found, i sincerely hope, to avail

us materially under any determination that may be formed of our conduct, if we make a proper use of them. At the same time, it should be observed that the speculations of one obscure individual, do not preclude further inquiry, or more beneficial observations from any other man.

3. What ought we to do?

Sir William Temple in an excellent treatise, written about a century ago,§ has pointed out four means of safety, by which rulers and people may be preserved from the evils of civil commotion. *The first* consists in avoiding all counsels or designs of innovation, in ancient and established forms and laws, especially those concerning liberty, property, and religion, and thereby leaving the channel of known and common justice clear and undisturbed. *The second*, in pursuing the true and common interest of the nation, without espousing those of any party or faction; or if these are so formed in a state, that they must incline to one or other, then to chuse and favor

that

§ Entitled "Of Popular Discontents."

that which is most popular, or wherein the greatest or strongest part of the people appear to be engaged. *A third*, is the countenancing and introducing as far as is possible the customs and habits of industry and parsimony; for frugal and industrious men are usually safe and friendly to the established government, as the idle and expensive are dangerous from their humours or necessities. *The last* consists in preventing dangers from abroad; for foreign dangers raise fears at home, and fears among the people raise jealousies of the prince or state, and give them ill opinions, either of their abilities, or their good intentions. Men are apt to think well of themselves and their nation, of their courage and their strength; and if they see it in danger, they lay the fault upon the weakness, ill conduct, or corruption of their governors, the ill orders of state, ill choice of officers, or ill discipline of armies; and nothing makes a discontent or sedition so fatal at home, as an invasion, or the threats and prospect of one from abroad.*

The

* Upon these four wheels, says he, the chariot of state may in

The man who seriously employs his thoughts on these sensible remarks, will find no difficulty in dilating and conforming them to the circumstances of our times and country. But, if the nation is to be saved, it must be done by the united efforts of the people, in conjunction with those of government; not by the acts of government, unaccompanied with the good wishes, and unassisted by the strength of the people.

The most unhappy effect of our divisions, (even if they were not so violent as they really are) is, that by disturbing our internal tranquillity, they divert the attention of government from proper pursuits, and necessarily dispossess

it

in all appearance drive easy and safe, or at least not be too much shaken by the usual roughness of ways, unequal humours of men, or any common accidents, further is not to be provided; for tho' the beginnings of great fires are often discovered, and thereby others easily prevented with care; yet some may be thrown in from engines far off, and out of sight: others may fall from Heaven.—In such cases when the flame breaks out, all that can be done is to remove as fast as can be all materials that are like to increase it, to employ all ways and methods of quenching it, to repair the breaches and losses it has occasioned, and to bear with patience what could not be avoided, or cannot be remedied.

Sir W. Temple's Works. v. 1. p. 262. Fo. edit.

it of those resources and of those energies which result from concord and sober confidence. Before, we can advance with safety a step farther, we must fall upon those measures which are best calculated to abate our discontents and reconcile all parties. Without *unanimity*, we shall lose our constitution, liberties, independence, and laws. This therefore is the first and most essential mean of safety. But, it will be asked, how is this desirable end to be obtained, after our mutual divisions have continued to rage and to ulcerate for more than six years? The answer is plain and obvious. Remove *the causes* of those peccant humours which have produced such disastrous effects; until this be done, the triumphal riding and unparalleled successes of our navy, and the good discipline and courage of our troops, will afford more grounds of alarm, than of real security. For, we are in that kind of situation, when victory is perhaps as dangerous to our welfare as defeat; a situation that is not unfamiliar to any one who is the least acquainted with the history of nations. While the Roman legions were gathering

thering laurels abroad, the empire was torn and convulsed within, by the folly of its rulers, and the desperation, feuds, and divisions of its citizens. It was this, as much as its extensive dominion that rendered abortive the successes of its armies, and precipitated its fall and ruin. Thus, it is evident, that victory abroad, is no compensation for disunion and violence at home ; it is on the contrary, in such a crisis, a national calamity, and the melancholy precursor of the loss of national independence. For in the heat of internal divisions, it has often happened, that one party in the exasperation of resentment, or in the dread of defeat, have resorted to the public enemy for assistance, while the brave defenders of the state, were contending on a remote frontier, and sacrificing their lives, when their presence was most desired, to uphold the dignity, and maintain the peace of their own country. § The most effectual methods of obtaining

§ The desperate extremity to which a party is reduced, often leads them to employ a remedy no less desperate. The history of England affords more examples of this nature, as far

taining this spirit of *unanimity*, consists in disengaging ourselves from the shackles of party, in renouncing every paltry consideration of self-interest, or passion, in having the magnanimity to suspend for a while lucrative views in favor of the general welfare, and reserving the decisions of past injuries to a less critical moment, and finally by climbing up the rock of the constitution, and there making our stand, in one compact, firm and indissoluble phalanx. We have before us the bright examples of the most venerable names of antiquity, who in similar circumstances, had the magnanimity to lay aside both private pique and the animosity of faction. *Aristides*, tho' he had been banished and proscribed

by

as i can recollect, than any other country. See in particular the case of the barons in the year 1216. Hume's Hist. of England. v. 1. p. 393. 4to. and Rapin's Hist. v. 1. p. 278. *Fo.* A weak or unequal faction in any state, may serve perhaps to enliven or animate the vigor of a government; but when it grows equal, or near proportioned in strength or number, and irreconcileable by the animosity of the parties, it cannot end without some violent crisis and convulsion of the state, and hardly without some new revolution, and perhaps final ruin of the government, in case a foreign invasion enters upon the breaches of Civil Distractions.

Sir W. Temple.

by his ungrateful country, when he perceived it to be endangered, hastened from Ægina to Salamis; and there counselled his rival and political enemy, offered his assistance in any measure that would benefit the state, and shared with him in the immortal glories of that day, when the combined fleet of Greece, routed and destroyed the mighty armaments of Xerxes.* Not less glorious was the eminent conduct of Fabius Maximus, after the fatal defeat of Minucius, "Let us lay aside, said the generous Consul, our reproaches till another time; let us fly to the succor of our country, and snatch victory from the hands of our enemies." This love of country was the soul of all his actions, and inspired him with unshaken constancy and firmness in its service, without permitting him to indulge the least resentment for the injuries he had received.§

The principal cause of the animosity of parties,

R

and

* Herodot. l. 8. c. 79. &c.

§ Compluribus injuriis laceratus, in eodem animi habitu permanit, nec unquam sibi reip. permisit irasci, tam perseverans in amore civium fuit. Val. Max. 3. 8.

and of the divisions of the people, is the demand on one side, and the denial on the other, of the necessity of reforms. What is deemed by one party dangerous innovations, the other insist upon as constitutional renovation. Whether the matter be a question of right or of political expediency, it deserves the serious attention of government; because it is not the interest of those who govern to set themselves in hostility against every species of innovation. For every law that is enacted is in some sort an innovation; and as the great Lord Chancellor Bacon sagely remarks, “every medicine is an innovation, and he that will not apply new remedies must expect new evils: for time is the greatest innovator. And if time of course alter things to the worse, and wisdom and counsel shall not alter them to the better, what shall be the end?”* There certainly

* Lord Verulam’s Essays or Counsels. Ess. 24. He says further,

It is true that what is settled by custom, though it be not good, yet at least it is fit. And those things which have long gone together are as it were confederate within themselves: whereas new things piece not so well; but though they help by their utility, yet they trouble by their inconformity. Besides

certainly was a time, when the calls for reformation were not heard among us; the wheel of government moved orderly and unclogged. There must therefore be some cause of all this disorder in the social body. It must arise either from the sense of evils which such reformations are said to be calculated to remove, or it must arise from a dissatisfied and mutinous spirit in the people. In either case, it will be politic to appease this

R 2

this

fides, they are like strangers, more admired, and less favoured.

All this is true, if time stood still; which contrariwise moveth so round, that a froward retention of custom is as turbulent a thing, as an innovation; and they that reverence too much old times, are but a scorn to the new. It were good therefore that men in their innovations ~~would~~ follow the example of time itself; which indeed innovateth greatly, but quietly, and by degrees scarce to be perceived: for otherwise whatsoever is new is unlooked for; and ever it mends some, and pairs other: and he that is holpen takes it for a fortune, and thanks the time; and he that is hurt for a wrong, and imputeth it to the author. It is good also not to try experiments in states, except the necessity be urgent, or the utility evident; and well-to beware that it be the reformation that draweth on the change, and not the desire of change that pretendeth the reformation. And, lastly, that the novelty, though it be not rejected, yet be held for a suspect: and, as the scripture saith, *That we make a stand upon the ancient way, and then look about us, and discover what is the straight and right way, and so to walk in it.*

Ibid.

spirit by timely concession, or to convince the people by sober reasoning, of the imprudence of their conduct. A new habit of thinking has gone abroad into the world. Let us dare to avow this truth, and to hope that government will not be stationary, when the public mind is progressive. For there is no better way to stop the rising of new sects and schisms, than to *reform abuses*, to compound the smaller differences, to proceed mildly, and not with sanguinary persecutions.*

It would be an happy omen of the future peace and prosperity of the country, if government, sensible of these truths, would by timely concessions, avert the risk and peril of violent and ruinous changes. The only way to prevent a revolution is to accede to moderate plans of reformation. But while we exert our public spirit, in the examination of such subjects, we should be cautious not to suffer any wild schemes of speculative perfection, to arrest our notice. Before the dreams of philosophy can be realized, the

moral

* Lord Verulam.

moral order of the world must be previously altered, and men must abandon all those passions for the restriction of which, government and laws were instituted. The man, who, to establish a fanciful or favorite theory, or to reduce into universal practice, the politics of the closet, at the hazard of throwing civil society into confusion, is a stranger to the best sentiments of mankind, and an enemy to its best interests. The lessons of civil wisdom, are not to be explored in the cold regions of metaphysical contemplation; nor to be learnt from the crudities of inexperienced statesmen. Before we undertake to lay down plans for the improvement of society, its past history and laws should be thoroughly understood, and an enlightened experience should be resorted to, as the best mean of promoting this end. The statesman, who would dive into the virtuous speculations of Plato or of Tully in preference to the practical knowledge of Thucydides, and Tacitus, would find himself extremely deficient in the science of policy, because he would be unacquainted with the leading passions of men. Experience

perience ought therefore to be our only guide in determining the utility of all political institutions, and this is a manifest advantage that our venerable constitution has long obtained over the nations of the earth. For it is not the result of a momentary compact, but of gradual and progressive wisdom; every where adapting itself to the emergencies of men, correcting what was wrong, pruning what was redundant, and establishing what was expedient. A fabric, that was originally reared and supported by wisdom, justice, and liberty, and having human happiness for its object, would never have survived the shocks of despotism nor the storms of civil commotion, if it had not been identified with the name and character of a Briton. The people of Great Britain have been remarked for their attachment to the laws and constitution of their country. This attachment is the result of no cold principle or obstinate prejudice, but is to be ascribed solely to the beneficial effects which that constitution is calculated to produce. It is the result of an impassioned love of order, liberty, and law,

law. Is such a constitution worthy of preservation? Repair the damages which it has sustained by the inroads of time and negligence. Or, has it no longer any charms for us?---Let us stretch hard the loins of prerogative, and weaken on all sides, every branch which militates against the encroachments of despotism; let us tamely view or loudly applaud the daring innovator, who pulls down every constitutional buttress, and impiously tramples under his feet, the noblest privileges of Englishmen. What will be the consequence of all this?---An alternative; and a fatal one it will prove. We shall have to choose between the two greatest evils that an offended God ever sent forth to curse and scourge the earth; we must choose, sad alternative! either to live under the monotonous tranquillity of absolute monarchy, or to deliver ourselves up, to the wild horrors of revolutionary anarchy and licentiousness. It may now be asked, can the constitution reform itself?---I answer, that it is not the constitution, but its abuses that want reformation; and to attain this end, we must recur to the constitution itself. By the

acknow-

acknowledged and universal custom of this land; the legislature is competent to effectuate any change that is not subversive of its general polity. In the capacious and transcendant power of parliament,* we shall find the means of averting every mischief, of remedying every grievance, of which the subject may have reason to dread or to complain. *It can change and create afresh even the constitution of the kingdom and of parliaments themselves.*† If this be the case, there can be no reason to dispute its *power* if it possess the *will* of producing such alterations; and it may be added with equal truth, that any reformation which may come from the hands of government will be more greedily accepted, and more peaceably enforced, than any efforts that may proceed from the determined enmity, and infuriated passions of the multitude. Whatever is done in a time of full internal tranquillity, has every probability of being done with soberness and wisdom. The best policy therefore is, to fortify and

* 4. Inst. 36.

† Blackst. Comment. v. 1. p. 156. 4to.

and repair our house before the tempest blows; and not to put off the time of repair until the tempest is actually blowing, because then, the means and the power of reformation will be impossible. To build up, to repair, or to improve requires a cool and sober head, but to pull down and destroy is an easier work; the work always of heated imaginations and ardent heads. The first proposition, that requires our determination is simply this; are reforms necessary? if they be, let them be executed quickly; that the nation may feel that the government has a strong interest in the general welfare. Nor can there be an object more gratifying to the Supreme Being, nor more exhilarating to a whole people, than a government acknowledging its own imperfections, and hastening to correct them. Such nobleness of conduct would revive our hopes, ensure our confidence without the aid of a bribe, baffle the attempts of the desperate, whose existence depends on the denial of all equitable reformations, restore tranquillity, and finally elevate us to the height of national happiness. In

the pursuit nevertheless of such schemes, every party should relinquish the pretensions by which it renders itself formidable or hateful to the rest of the community. Every man should recede from systems that are derogatory to the great aim of social tranquillity; for the love of system according to the sentiment of an elegant and profound philosopher,* is to be reckoned among the chief causes that have retarded the progress of any science. In steering our course, it is material to know the tendency of changes, whether the effect is to be near or remote. A well informed understanding, in the worst situations, may secure some happy effects, tho' far short of the ideal perfection which the speculative are apt to look for in the affairs of men. It should be remembered that the ignorant are as apt to tamper with the best constitution, as to reform the worst. The greatest and most extensive benefit which the wise can procure, is the establishment or preservation of just institutions. The greatest injury that wicked men can commit,

* *Institutes of Moral Philosophy*, by Dr. Ferguson.

mit, is the overthrow or corruption of such institutions. As then the constitution was not the work of a day, we ought not to regard it, even at this time, as complete, nor to stand still and deride the practice and the wisdom of our fore-fathers; but on the contrary, to give ample scope for every liberal and useful institution that may have a tendency either to improve or to repair it. We do not venerate laws and liberty because they are old, but because they are beneficial to man, whose existence in society without them, would be both wretched and turbulent. The respect which is paid to ancient forms and constitutions of government would be puerile on any other principle, and alike undeserving of approbation, regard, or obedience. The storm which for several years has agitated France and shook Europe to its base, may serve as an eternal memento to rulers and people, of the folly on the one side, of resisting every equitable plan of reform, and of the imprudence on the other, of pushing those reformati ons to too great a length, and of wielding the newly

acquired power of a great empire, to the purposes of illegitimate ambition. When the French court was called upon by the general voice of the people, to reform the abuses which prevailed in almost every part of the administration, it affected to listen to the public remonstrance, but it was not sincere in its declarations. It put off the hour of reformation, in the idle hope that some event might arise to amuse the public mind, and to divert it from objects of political speculation. It soon however had reason to repent of its illjudged policy, but it repented too late; and well might it repent; for to use the eloquent expression of Lord Bolingbroke on an occasion not very dissimilar “the vessel was now full, and this last drop made the waters of bitterness overflow.”* Doubtless, the situation of the monarchy of France, and the actual condition of the monarchy of England were materially different: but notwithstanding this difference, the political example, is not less cogent and expressive. M. Rabaud de St. Etienne has attributed the principal cause

of

* Remarks on the Hist. of England.

of the French revolution to the circumstance above mentioned. "The advisers of the king," says he, "laughed at the opinions and satires of the people; and when at length in consequence of the encreasing light of knowledge, a public opinion, stamped with an imposing dignity, was formed, which after all was only the expression of the general will, the ministers persisted in their imperious mode of acting, and in their insolent disdain. This inattention to propriety proved their ruin. It cannot be too often repeated, that usurped power owes her abasement to no other circumstance, than her not having been aware that she was perishable.†

In short, if there exist in the minds of men, any apprehensions respecting the progress of republicanism,

† Les conseils des rois se jouoient des jugements du peuple et de ses satyres; et quand enfin, les lumieres croissant toujours, il s'est formé une opinion publique imposante, qui n'étoit, après tout, que l'expression de la volonté générale, les ministres ont persévéré dans leurs formes imperatives et leur dédain insultant. Cet oubli des convenances les a perdus. On ne sauroit trop redire que les pouvoirs usurpés ne tombent que parcequ'ils n'ont pas vu qu'ils devoient finir.

Précis Hist. de la Rev. Francoise.

canism, those apprehensions must increase upon them in proportion to the prolonged refusal of necessary reforms. For to *procrastinate reforms is to propagate republicanism.* Make the constitution lovely, and it will be beloved. Preach to the people unceasingly of its perfections, while they are unceasingly complaining only of its abuses, and you will put them out of conceit with the constitution; they will at length confound even the excellencies of government, with the errors of its mal-administration. These are serious truths, and we cannot think too often, nor act too soon in conformity with them. There is no surer way of establishing unanimity and of securing our internal quiet and security. §

When

§ The reforms which I have alluded to above, are various and some of them complicated, and by no means refer to the mere reform of the Commons House of Parliament, which is by many considered as the *only cure* and sovereign remedy for all our evils. The only use of such a change, consists in the political security which it would give to the civil liberties of the people. For, it will not be controverted, that most excellent laws have been enacted under the present constitution of the House of Commons, and that it might at this day, by wise regulations, reform every abuse of which the subject complains. The argument of those who wish for a reform in the

When unanimity is established, we ought to direct our attention to objects more minute, altho' not less necessary to our political salvation; and they present themselves under the twofold aspect of exterior defence, and of internal security. In ease either of war or peace, the same measures

under

the representation of the people, may be resolved into these principles; that the neglect or disinclination of the House to undertake those reformations, proves the necessity of rendering that organ of the public voice more popular; that the corruption prevalent among the individual members, gives the people no hold on their patriotism and integrity; and lastly, that the spirit of the constitution which fully provides for the exercise of popular rights, requires the enlargement of the popular influence in proportion to the increased wealth, commerce, and improvement of cities and towns; and that therefore, it was never intended to circumscribe the representation within any determinate limits. This reasoning is forcibly illustrated by Mr. Locke in his treatise "Of Civil Government" b. 2. c. 13. §. 157. He says "Things of this world are in so constant a flux, that nothing remains long in the same state. Thus people, riches, trade, power, change their stations, flourishing mighty cities come to ruin, and prove in time neglected desolate corners, whilst other unfrequented places grow into populous countries, filled with wealth and inhabitants. But things not always changing equally, and private interest often keeping up customs and privileges, when the reasons of them are ceased, it often comes to pass, that in governments, where part of the legislative consists of representatives chosen by the people, that in tract of time this representation becomes very unequal and disproportionate.

under proper restrictions may be adopted as means of safety. And first of exterior defence. Under this consideration, we should form every foreign interest in relation to the particular interest, and to the particular situation of England only. Shut out from the continent, and separated by

portionate to the reasons it was at first established upon. To what gross absurdities the following of custom, when reason has left it, may lead, we may be satisfied, when we see the bare name of a town, of which there remains not so much as the ruins, where scarce so much housing as a sheepcote, or more inhabitants than a shepherd is to be found, sends *as many representatives* to the grand assembly of law makers, as a whole county numerous in people, and powerful in riches. 'This strangers stand amazed at, and every one must confess needs a remedy.' Perhaps for this purpose, it might be advantageous to form a committee of the House of Commons consisting of seventeen members, and no more, under the denomination of *a committee on the state of the nation*, whose time should be entirely devoted to the consideration of the necessity of reforms, and the best means of obtaining them peaceably, sedately, and gradually. To this committee might be added a body composed of not less than seven lawyers, who should attend only to give their opinions (any of the Judges to attend at his pleasure) and proper secretaries, who should take minutes of every opinion and of every transaction relating to the object of the committee. Persons of every description should be invited to deliver in writing with their names and places of abode, whatever plans, whether political, agricultural, or commercial, that may tend to the benefit of the nation. The period of time, allowed for the Report of the

the sea from every other country, we possess the power of defying the arms of all Europe; and the high privilege of regulating our domestic policy without affronting the established forms, or alarming the timid prejudices of any neighboring nation. With these advantages, we should be guided solely by the wise expedients of our fore-

T

fathers,

the Committee, should be three years from the next Session of Parliament: and after having examined all the reasonings and evidences pro and con, the Report after having been printed, should be presented and debated three months after, under each distinct head in a Committee of the whole house, subject nevertheless to frequent adjournments. (N. B. The members of the Committee should not be chosen by ballot, but by open election; and out of the body of lawyers, who may tend in their names (and they should be all invited so to do) the House should *openly* choose seven.) The members of the Committee and the lawyers should be most handsomely paid for their trouble and attendance, and a proper allowance should be made to those individuals whose plans should be approved of by the whole House. Every member of the said Committee, absenting himself without leave (except in case of sickness to be certified by two physicians) to forfeit for such absence, 20*£.* per diem, and every lawyer 5*£.* During the period of their sitting, no address, petition, or writing, signed by more than 17 persons to be received by the said Committee; and no public meeting whatever to be held in any part of the nation, for the purpose of addressing such Committee, under penalty of 100*£.* the advisers, and 20*£.* each the attendant of such Meeting. This regulation ~~not~~ to exclude, any petitions to the House of Commons.

fathers, and by the constitutional precedents deduced from the best and purest fountains of English history. The reign of Queen Elizabeth is a glorious and unanswerable proof that the halcyon days, so much boasted of, and so seldom found, days of prosperity as well as peace, may be enjoyed in an ISLAND, whilst all the neighboring continent is filled with alarms; and even laid waste by war. The situation of an Island affords great advantages, when they are wisely improved; and when they are neglected, as great disadvantages may result from this situation. Our own histories will shew how an Island may approach too near the continent, and be fatally drawn into that great vortex. Lest we should ramble too widely in the large field, which opens itself, let us confine our reflections to some of those different means and objects, either of *defence* or *offence*, which nature, improved by art presents to people, who inhabit islands, or to people, who inhabit the continent, according to their different situations. A powerful NAVY is of indispensable necessity to the former of these.

Without

Without it, they must be poor and exposed. With it, they may be rich and secure. Barriers of fortified towns, and great standing armies are of the same necessity to the latter. Without this security, they lye open to every inroad, and at the mercy of every neighbor. With it, they may be safe from foreign danger, and even terrible to those, who live round them. But then as the sea is a barrier of no expence, and as a maritime force carries no domestic danger along with it, but enriches the community it defends, so a fortified barrier, and a regular army, which are necessary to secure a nation, situate on the continent against foreign danger, carry great domestic inconveniencies, and even dangers too, along with them. Both of them like armor, too heavy to be borne, waste the strength of those, who are covered by them; and an army, like a sword, which recoils on the blow, may wound the constitution, it was meant to defend. But farther; as particular families, by uniting together, formed larger societies, for their common defence, and gave rise to the kingdoms,

and states, which have appeared in the world; so these larger societies have, ever since, found it necessary, or advantageous, to unite together in various manners; sometimes by an entire union, or an incorporation of different people into one body politic; sometimes by a partial, or federal union of distinct states in one common cause; and at all times, by alliances, made on particular occasions, and suggested by a real, or seeming conformity of interests. This occasional union by alliances with other states, of which alone we are to speak in this place, is so necessary to all the nations on the continent, that even the most powerful cannot subsist without it; and those, who manage it best, are accounted wisest. Their several interests are the objects of their alliances; and as the former are subject to change, the latter must vary with them. Such variations, whether occasioned by the course of accidents, or by the passions of men, tho' made by a few, will affect many; because there always are, and always must be, systems of alliances subsisting among these nations; and therefore, as a change.

change in some of the parts of one system necessarily requires a change in all the rest; so the alteration of one system necessarily requires an alteration of the others. Thus are they always tossed from peace to war, and from war to peace. Perpetual negotiation is the life and soul of their governments. Their well being, nay their safety at home, requires that they should be always busy abroad. It is necessary for them to be *mediators*, *arbitrators*, or, which is infinitely worse, *guaranties*; to be contracting parties in preliminary, provincial, or explanatory treaties; in defensive, or offensive alliances; by which means, they get over daily difficulties, by the multiplication of lasting incumbrances. The interfering and clashing of their rights and pretensions, and the various obligations, by which they stand bound to one another, appear to be, and are the immediate causes of all these disputes and contentions. But the principal and remote cause arises from the proximity and other circumstances of their situations. That necessity, or advantage, which gave occasion to the origi-

nal engagements, has maintained and multiplied them since; and the last would not be reasonable, if the first had not been necessary. Here then arises an essential difference between those objects, which are proper to the policy of an *island*, and those, which are so to the policy of the *continent*; a difference greatly to the advantage of the former; the circumstances of whose situation not requiring so constant and intimate an union with other states, either for defence or offence, render unnecessary a great part of the engagements, which prove such heavy and lasting incumbrances on the latter. An island under one government, advantageously situated, rich in itself, richer by its commerce, can have no necessity, in the ordinary course of affairs, to take up the policy of the continent, to enter into the system of alliances we have been speaking of; or in short, to act any other part, than that of a friendly neighbor, and a fair trader. If an extraordinary crisis happen on the continent, which may endanger the safety even of those, who are separated from it,

it, self-preservation will no doubt determine men, as it ought, to unite by stricter alliances with those powers, with whom they are occasionally united by a more immediate interest; but even in this case, neither will self-preservation require, nor good policy suffer, that such a people should enter deep into the quarrels, or involve themselves intricately, much less continually, in the political schemes of the continent. We pass over offensive cases, because it is manifest that the people of an island can have no interest in making foreign acquisitions, and that therefore it would be absurd in them to spend their blood and treasure in acquiring only for others; or to attack any farther than is necessary to defend. We confine ourselves to the case of defence before mentioned; and upon that we say, a people on the continent may have reason to engage as deeply in defence of another country, as if they defended the walls of their own towns, or the doors of their own houses; because another country may be the sole barrier of their own. But this can never be reasonably done by the people of an island,

island, who have another, and a better barrier than any the continent can form for them. Such a people are to look on their engagements with other countries, as on outworks cast up in haste, which may serve to defeat a weak attack, or to delay and disappoint a strong one. But it would be the height of folly in them; even in one of those extraordinary conjunctures, which we now suppose, to lay the whole stress of their defence here; to spend their strength improperly; and to forego those advantages, which nature has given them. The nations on the continent might teach them another lesson. They are careful to employ every advantage of their situation; a river; a lake; a ridge of mountains; and shall the inhabitants of an island neglect the Sea? Shall they do by choice all which other nations are obliged to do by necessity? Surely not; and if at any time such a conduct can be proved necessary to certain purposes, we think it will result, from this proof, that such purposes should be laid aside, not that such measures should be pursued.*

For

* Rem. on the Hist. of England.

Fortified by these reasonings, i feel myself emboldened in declaring, that with Prussia as an ally, with a formidable navy, and a well disciplined national militia, we shall have no cause to dread the enmity of any of the powers of Europe. That a powerful navy is essential to our national independence, is a sentiment strictly national; a sentiment which we have all cherished in early youth, and which we never recal in later periods of life, without feeling a glow of extacy and national pride.* Even if peace should be proclaimed to morrow, it would be politic in the

U

present

* "If the Athenians inhabited an *ISLAND*," says one of the greatest generals of Antiquity, and besides enjoyed the empire of the sea, they would, as long as they were possessed of these advantages, be able to annoy others, and at the same time be out of all danger of being annoyed." Xenophon. de. Repub. Athen. One would imagine, says Montesquieu, that Xenophon was speaking of England. Esprit. des Loix. I. 21. c. 7.

In order to support a naval militia, as well as to encourage Agriculture, to prevent poverty (which is more politic than to relieve it) and all those crimes, *which are always expected from the defenders of the country, immediately after the conclusion of a peace*, the waste lands might be appropriated under a small rent, to the use of such able bodied seamen, as choose to hold certain portions of Lands on the tenure of naval service; when called upon by the crown; in the same manner,

present distracted state of Europe, to maintain a naval militia, which without any great expence, might be made to unite together our natural and acquired advantages of situation and commerce. If, in consequence of the establishment of a permanent national militia, all our regular regiments were to be reduced, excepting a few regiments

of

certain portions might be divided among the soldiers of the reduced regiments, on condition of their serving as marines on board the fleet. By this plan, on a moderate computation, i have found support to 50,000 seamen, and 10,000 marines, with their respective wives and children, independently of the advantages which agriculture, population, and the national defence would derive from it.—On *too extensive colonies*, i have many objections unless they be defended by their own militia and by our ships of war only; they have a tendency otherwise to diminish the population, to debilitate the strength, and to exhaust the treasure of the mother country, by the number of civil and military agents which they give occasion to employ. If indeed, the price of labor were to rise in proportion to the increased price of the necessaries of life; if the inferior class of society were not condemned to be stationary, when the more fortunate orders of mankind were reaping great and disproportionate profit from them, these objections would be removed: because then, a free and liberal operation would be allowed to the productive industry of the laboring class, and they would be no longer in that dependent condition, wherein an affected charity doles out to them the scanty means of subsistence for nearly one half of the year, in order to keep them crawling upon the earth during the other half. With the Colonies we possessed before the war, our credit was so great that stocks were nearly *at par*.

of horse, and the corps of artillery, which ought to be encreased; if the officers who now command those regiments, and who from having devoted themselves to the military profession deserve every remuneration from their grateful country, were to be appointed to the command of those battalions of national militia, thus combining military experience, with volunteer zeal; i am persuaded we should feel all the security arising from the best disciplined army, without the enormous expence attending it, and that we should have nothing to apprehend from invasion, if from unfavorable winds or any other cause, the invaders should escape the vigilance and thunder of the British navy.

If, in the second case, we contemplate the means of securing *internal tranquillity*, we shall find, that independently of that *unanimity* which has been recommended above, and which will arise only from a spirit of liberal concession, there are many subordinate considerations of equal importance to the public welfare. Some kind of

Censorial rigor should be devised to check the extreme profligacy and frontless immorality of this downward age. And perhaps, the safest mode of correcting this evil among the lower orders, would be to hold out encouragements to marriage and population. For, it is the dreadful idea of inability to provide for a family, which in a great measure, occasions the vices and crimes of the commonalty, and floods our streets with the victims of prostitution and despair. If the higher orders of society be not deemed incorrigible, the most certain method of establishing good examples, and of extending moral probity and public decorum, would consist in a careful and virtuous education. The age we live in, is impregnated with sentiments of insubordination; and respect to rank, titles, and persons, seems to diminish in proportion to the levity with which the longest confirmed authority is treated. It would therefore be a wise and provident measure, to impose certain restrictions on the mode of educating the sons and daughters of the nobility, in order that those who give the tone of fashion to the vulgar,

may

may also communicate to them, the noblest principles of integrity, independence, and public spirit. Our penal laws are written with the pen of Draco; their number exceeds belief, and their principles have been justly censured by the most eminent of our lawyers. The first nation upon the face of the earth, that began a system of benevolent legislation, by the abolition of the torture, still retains more sanguinary and vindictive laws in its penal code, than any other nation of Europe. Our police is miserably defective, and ought to undergo considerable revision, as well as receive considerable amendments. Our poor laws are a monstrous chaos of crude inventions, and undigested expedients; amid all our visionary schemes for the improvement of them, we are at length amazed to find that the industry of one half of the parish is not able to maintain the whole.* They are more calculated to encrease poverty, than to support it; and the bread is but

* Black. Comment. 1. 353. See also, "Observations on the more Ancient Statutes," by the Hon. Daines Barrington, 5th edit, p. 536. to p. 541.

but too often snatched from the mouth of the pauper, to furnish to the luxuries of the collectors and other officers. It is an indisputable fact, that one half of the immense treasure raised yearly in this kingdom (so honorable to the national character, but so reproachful of our political oeconomy) for the maintenance of the poor, is embezzled, lavished, or feasted away by the officers of the poor, and what is worse, pocketted by lawyers. All the poor laws, now in being, are so many departures from the common Law of the land. If therefore we were to strike them off the Statute roll, and to recur to the single statute of 43. Eliz. which was entirely founded on the Common law; and if according to the spirit and ancient practice of that law, the independent country gentlemen, would undertake the duties of overseers of the poor, and every litigation be expedited without fee; if instead of miserable shifts, and lame expedients, in order to patch up the flaws occasioned by the neglect of the old and excellent scheme for the provision of the poor, we were to adopt rigidly this policy,

we

we should remove that extraordinary phenomenon in a free country, of a numerous poor, furnishing wealth to their protectors, and fortunes to lawyers. If the country gentlemen, whose fortunes enable them to enjoy an easy and elegant independence, with the greatest leisure, were to undertake this task, they would conciliate the affections of the poor, and be justly entitled to the gratitude of their country for such efforts of public spirit. It is indeed a *duty* that they owe to their country, and which it cannot well dispense with; for they were never intended to pass away their lives in listless indolence, in the society of dogs and horses, or in the fatal sports of the turf or the gambling table, nor to exist like drones in the great social hive; but to employ their education and fortunes in the engagements of active patriotism, and in distributing comfort and happiness in their several counties. The man, who thus employs his time and fortune, is truly a practical legislator, an oeconomist for the public, and a benefactor of mankind without ostentation; he is a more useful member of society

society, and a more disinterested patriot, than the brawler at St. Stephen's, or the sycophant at St. James's.

TO CONCLUDE. It is now more than four years since i have addressed you. In the interval, the greatest revolutions of empire and of opinion have occurred, a deluge of innocent blood has overflown the scaffold and the field of battle, and Europe has become a vast Aceldama: Many of you engaged, in the bustling scenes of life, have turned aside with disgust from the spectacle of human sorrows, and have endeavored to drown all melancholy reflections on the state of the country, amid the levities of fashion, or the ordinary occupations of industry: others, more alive to the national safety, have boldly taken an active part in our divisions, and shared in the various applauses or censures that unhappily arise from opposite sentiments. Far different has been my lot. I have been doomed, in the morning of my days, to count the hours as they passed, and to supply the sweet converse of

friends

friends and relatives; with tracing in solitude, the destructive paths of human ambition, and the melancholy ravages of the passions. Scarcely had i stepped over the threshold of infancy, when for having attempted, in the enthusiasm of youth, to revive the ancient spirit of the country, i was snatched from the world, accused, tried, and punished with a severity that aged turbulence could hardly have deserved. Like a reed broken by the tempest, i have since remained; a useless member of an animated world. Against my enemies public or personal, i bear no resentments; on the contrary, i feel my love of country encreased in proportion to the sufferings i have met with for it and from it. Imprisonment to a man of my way of thinking is less irksome, than the silence of the cloister to the pedant. A prison indeed, may secure the person, but it cannot enslave the mind; if it resolve to be free, no "fantastic tricks" of human power, can render it otherwise. Enthusiasm, it is true, may be controlled or corrected, but it is not the prison that possesses this talismanic efficacy; it is the habit

of reflection. The happiest, the most rational, the most tranquil days of my life, i glory to say, have been passed in confinement, in despight of the contemptible shafts of calumny, which have been unceasingly launched against me. It requires fortitude to bear with adversity, but magnanimity to forgive and to forget. On the strength of this principle, i submit these few sheets to your consideration. Tho' you may not approve of all, yet even the weakest and worst of them are not altogether without their utility. They serve at least to animate the public passions of men, and rouse them to seek out the means of promoting the happiness of the society.* Perchance an happy idea may arise from my fallacies (if such they be) and as a lover of truth will often find it useful to read doubtful speculations, in order to improve his mind; or as a Christian will peruse with attention the writings of Atheists and Deists, in order to be more confirmed in his faith; in the same manner, benefit may result from the most visionary political remarks. Let those

* Theory of Moral Sentiments, by Adam Smith. v. 1. p. 472.

those who think that things will last their time, or rather, let those who do not think at all, continue to amuse themselves with dreams of national felicity. But let the man, who has courage to think, dare likewise to avow his thoughts, and to act in conformity to them. His errors may be great, but the demi-god within the breast, will tell him that he is honest. My creed i fear not to publish.—May Great Britain remain for ever a limited monarchy, under the guardian care of the illustrious House of Hanover; but may the manners and habit of thinking of the people, be purely republican !

*Agnoscent Britanni suam causam.—Proinde ituri
in aciem, & majores vestros, & posteros cogitate.*

Tacit. in vit. Agric. cap. 32.

Dorchester Castle,
5th July, 1797.

H. R. Yorke.